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[BETWEEN THE CUP AND THE LIP.]

EVANDER; OR, A MAN'S PUNISHMENT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Heart's Content," "Tempting Fortune," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XI.

Walter: Oh, horrible fate! Outcast, rejected,
As one with pestilence infected!
Hubert: Then was the family tomb unsealed,
And broken helmet, sword and shield
Buried together, in common wreck,
As is the custom, when the last
Of any princely house has passed,
And thrice, as with a trumpet-blast,
A herald shouted down the stair
The words of warning and despair.

The Golden Legend.

THE doctor looked very gravely at the miserable man before him who had become so strangely altered in so short a space of time, and when the solitude and seclusion of a private room was reached he searched in a small leather bag containing medicines which he always carried about with him, for a particular drug, the efficacy of which, in peculiar cases of paralysis of the tongue, he was well acquainted with.

"Writing is tedious," he exclaimed; "drink this, and you will, if you are Sir Charles Evander, as you assert and as I am perfectly willing to believe, recover the use of your tongue. The mixture I am giving you is an infallible specific against those poisons which impede the utterance of a man and finally deprive him of the power of speech."

Evander thankfully drank the mixture which was prepared for him, and in a few minutes began to feel its almost magical effects. The huskiness which had affected him, and which had rendered his voice so thick as to become unintelligible, grew less and less. Dr. Roy watched him with the pride which a skilful physician naturally takes in the quick action of the prescription he has given, and when, after the lapse of a quarter of an hour, he heard Evander address

him in a voice he had listened to so often and knew so well, he smiled with pleasure, and exclaimed, as he extended his hand:

"You are Sir Charles Evander. I had a slight doubt as to your identity at first, but now I am convinced that you are the young gentleman in whom I have taken such an interest. Let us have some luncheon and some sparkling wine. Do not exercise your voice too much just yet, but after we have eaten something I will listen to your history in detail, which will enable me with more certainty to decide upon the course of action which we ought to adopt under the circumstances."

The repast was quickly ordered and as quickly consumed. Evander's power of speech became more perfect and restored every minute, and he was fully able to tell the doctor all that had happened to him. Dr. Roy listened with much interest and attention. The romantic and sensational adventure which Sir Charles had met with pleased his analytical mind. He was fond of probing the hearts of mankind and tracing their actions to their sources.

"Mr. Mordaunt has acted in a most extraordinary manner," he said, at length, as he poured out another glass of wine and cracked some filberts. "You are suffering from the poison contained in the leaves of a plant called the tuba. It is well known to the Thugs and other inhabitants of upper India, but how either Mr. Mordaunt or Miss St. Aubyn—"

"Lady Evander, doctor, you forget that I am a married man," interrupted Sir Charles.

"The fact did not escape me," answered Dr. Roy. "But I prefer to call her Miss St. Aubyn because I consider that she has no right whatever to the title. I was about to remark that it passed my comprehension how either of them could have gained a knowledge of the peculiar virtues, or rather evils, of the tuba. Perhaps they met some physician, who, like myself, has been in the East, and who, while there, took the utmost care to make himself acquainted with the secrets of the natives."

"It is of little consequence to me," rejoined Evander, "how they gained possession of the secret. What I want to know, doctor, is, can you cure me?"

"I can. Rest perfectly satisfied of that; but I am unable to do so immediately," answered Dr. Roy. "It will require some trouble and research in this hemisphere to meet with the particular drugs which will be necessary for the compound mixture which I shall have to prepare for your thorough cure. Give me three weeks or a month, and I shall have everything in readiness. One bottle of the medicine I intend to give you will last you a fortnight, and at the expiration of that period, you will be as white as any other Englishman. In short, you will resume your natural appearance, of which your enemies have robbed you. Upon my word, they laid their plans well, but they did not count upon me."

"I cannot congratulate myself too much upon meeting with you," answered Evander. "When all the doctors in London gave up my case as hopeless, I turned to you as a drowning man will turn and cling to a straw. I never thought I could feel a warm regard for any man, but for you, doctor, I entertain the warmest respect and regard."

"Gratitude, my dear friend, is always a sense of favours to come, and not of those received," answered Dr. Roy, with a smile. "But do not let us waste time in abstract reflections upon the cardinal virtues. Listen to what I have to propose. It is arranged by your wife, and her accomplice, Mr. Mordaunt, that the body supposed to be yours, and which, with shameless effrontery, they have made the world believe is your corpse, shall be buried at Kensal Green Cemetery in a few days."

"I will attend that funeral," exclaimed Evander. "It will be a novelty to be present at one's own obsequies, will it not?"

"You are at liberty to do as you like, though if you followed my advice, you would not come prominently forward just yet, for I will defy your nearest and dearest friend, if you have one, to recognise you. Even when restored to your natural colour you will have great difficulty in proving your case before the tribunals."

"I must have my revenge," said Evander. "and it will please me to disconcert my enemies. My belief is that Lily St. Aubyn, who is now hypocriti-

cally weeping for my supposed death in the character of Lady Evander, intends to marry Mr. Mordaunt when sufficient time has elapsed to allow her to do so with decency. This marriage shall never take place, mark my words. If I cannot be restored to my former appearance, and expose the fraud of which I am the victim, I will assassinate the pair of them rather than they should be united! Oh, no, they shall not do me a cruel wrong and laugh at me for an imbecile! I promise you they shall bitterly regret the hideous metamorphosis to which they have subjected me."

"If you appear at once and threaten them, they will take effectual measures to put a stop to the means you will have recourse to in order to cure yourself," said the doctor, adding, "I should not wonder if they attacked me even, finding that I was your sole resource. Suppose I were to die, never mind whether naturally or by the hand of a murderer, what would become of you? Your only chance of becoming hale and hearty once more would be to go to India and have recourse to the native physicians, who could not, perhaps, do you so much good as I can, and for this reason, the longer your present colour remains, the more likely it is to make a lasting impression upon you, and render your cure difficult, if not, after a certain lapse of time, next to impossible."

"Leave all that to me. I am prepared to run the risk, and take the consequences of my actions," replied Evander, with a laugh. "Do you, doctor, go to your herbal and prepare the medicine which is to enable me to take my place among my fellow men once more."

"Very well; take your own course. You shall have the medicine I have promised you as soon as I can possibly prepare it," replied the doctor; "and now, we may as well go to London, and stay at the same hotel, you know. I invariably locate myself at the 'Clarendon,' and I will introduce you as a rich Anglo-Indian or nabob, sojourning in this country. You will, very probably, meet some of your old acquaintances, and it cannot be that the meeting will prove unproductive of amusement, even if you have to listen to the most severe comments upon your memory."

Evander rejected the idea that any remarks upon his character, however severe, could have any effect upon him, and he accompanied the doctor to London; but before he went to the hotel at which they intended to stay, he went to a confectioner's and purchased the wardrobe of an *honest* prince, the doctor supplying him with what money he required, as the purchase cost nearly two thousand pounds, which he could not pay out of the small income Lily St. Aubyn allowed him out of his own magnificent patrimony.

Dropping the name of Leopold Barclay, which Mordaunt had bestowed upon him, he called himself, Moolvie Mussuroodeen Khan Bahadur, and everyone took him for a native Indian prince, fabulously rich, and treated him with the respect which the supposition, as well as the reality of enormous wealth, will gain for anyone in any part of the world.

An evening paper, which was supposed to circulate in the fashionable world, gave an account of the intended arrangements for the funeral of the late Sir Charles Evander, and the latter ascertained from this journal that the relatives and friends of the deceased were expected to assemble on the following day at his town house in Belgrave at an early hour.

He had already resolved to be present, and he dressed himself with great care, and ordering a carriage, was driven to Evander House at the appointed time. He had gone in a rich Indian costume, which contrasted strangely with the sombre black by which he was surrounded, and his gay colours seemed a positive insult to all assembled.

Many were the eager and curious faces which were turned towards him, faces which he knew well, but the men and women who wore them did not dream for an instant that he was the very man for whom they were mourning, and whose untimely loss they had met together to deplore.

A cynical smile stole to his lips as he thought of the mutability of human affairs.

Lady Evander was receiving the condolence of her friends, and in the room was Mr. Mordaunt. Sir Charles's mother was too ill to attend. Mordaunt was to be chief mourner.

As a servant ushered him into the room, and gave a card, on which was written his Indian name, to Lady Evander, Sir Charles felt a thrill of delight as he observed the effect of the announcement upon the two conspirators.

Lily St. Aubyn went deadly pale, and her eyes scintillated with a strange light, her hands were unable to hold the card, which fell unnoticed to the ground, and she trembled visibly, while Mordaunt stood like a statue, and, in spite of his wonderful self-control, could not suppress a violent twitching of the muscles of the mouth, which denoted the internal agitation of which he was the prey.

Evander noted all this, and was delighted beyond

measure. His appearance there and at that time was to them what the falling of a shell would be to the guardians of a powder magazine when it descended in their midst.

Advancing with polished grace and assuming as sad an air as he could simulate under the circumstances, which, in fact, inclined him more to laugh than cry, he bowed to Lily and to Mr. Mordaunt.

"As an old friend of the deceased gentleman whose loss we all of us so much deplore," he said, "I trust that you will not consider me an intruder."

Lady Evander bowed. She could not trust herself to speak, and her pale cheek went still paler.

To Mordaunt he added in a lower tone: "You shall answer to me for this farce of death, prince of hypocrites that you are."

"I do not recognise you in any way," replied Mordaunt, turning coldly on his heel.

Presently the funeral procession started. Ladies did not accompany the hearse. Evander in a short time found himself alone with two ladies, one being Lily St. Aubyn, his wife, the other, Lady Carisbrook, the wife of the man whom he had deprived of life in the heartless and cruel manner related in the early part of this tale.

Lily found the presence of Evander intolerable. She longed for Mordaunt to return to advise her how to act. Evander gazed upon her, and she averted her eyes. He approached her and said:

"You treat me very distantly. Have you forgotten Leopold Barclay?"

Well indeed did she remember the name that she and Mr. Mordaunt had with inexorable sternness condemned him to bear for the remainder of his life, but she shrank from him with horror.

"What," he continued, "may not a man speak to his own wife?"

Lily was unable to bear any more. She reeled against the wall and fell heavily upon the floor.

"Help!" cried Evander; "her ladyship has fainted."

CHAPTER XII.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head;
Fantastic thoughts returned,
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burned."

Marmion.

THE brief conversation which had taken place between Evander and Lily had not been overheard by Lady Carisbrook, who was much paler, thinner, and thoughtful than when we last saw her. The shocking death of her husband had grieved her much, but she did not know the share Evander had in his decease. She had remained on friendly terms with his mother, and it was by her wish that she waited upon Lily on the day of the funeral.

Assistance was quickly summoned, and Lily taken to an adjoining apartment. Evander did not evince much concern, but making some remark to Lady Carisbrook about the trying nature of the occasion, and the weak state to which she had been probably reduced by the calamity which had overtaken her, expressed a wish to be informed if she speedily recovered.

Lady Carisbrook promised to bring him what intelligence she could, and he remained pacing the apartment with impatient footsteps, thinking that he would give much to be able to appear as he formerly was, and proclaim to all the perfidy of his wife, and the relentless treachery of Frederick Mordaunt, whom he hated with a fierce and undying hatred.

When Lady Carisbrook returned, after an absence of a few minutes, she informed him that Lily was much better; she had only been attacked by an ordinary faint, more the effect of weakness than anything else, and she added, "I pity her sincerely, for though I am not in receipt of her confidence, I am convinced she feels her husband's loss deeply, and there is this bond of sympathy between us, as I dare say you may have heard, if you have, as I imagine, been in London society—my husband, Lord Carisbrook, and Sir Charles Evander, were both suicides, though why my husband should have taken his own life Heaven only knows."

"And me!" exclaimed Evander.

"You. Do you know why he died by his own hand?" she almost screamed Lady Carisbrook. "But no," she added on reflection, "it is impossible that you should be acquainted with the motive for the dreadful deed unless you are a sorcerer. I have always thought that Sir Charles Evander might have thrown some light upon the subject, but—"

"Nor were you mistaken," interrupted Evander. "You shall hear why Lord Carisbrook killed himself. He believed that you were guilty of indiscretions unbecoming his wife and that Evander was the cause of your altered conduct. He applied to Evander for an explanation, which the latter refused to give him, and Lord Carisbrook struck him. This necessitated a duel, but as duels are forbidden in England, it was agreed that a duel should be fought

by lot, that is to say, the two enemies should draw lots which should kill himself, and your husband drew the fatal slip of paper which resulted in his extraordinary death."

"How do you know this?" inquired Lady Carisbrook, who became deadly pale.

"Because I am Sir Charles Evander," he answered.

"Sir," exclaimed her ladyship, very gravely. "I have listened to you with great attention because there is nothing absolutely impossible in the wonderful story you have told me, though it is improbable in the extreme. From what I have heard of Sir Charles Evander, I believe him to have been a bad man; we will however, say nothing in disparagement of the dead. Sir Charles was, if my information is correct, quite capable of ruining a lady's reputation by the dimmest innuendo, but we have this day assisted at the last rites of Sir Charles Evander, so that it is utterly folly for you to say that you are that gentleman; and you do me a cruel wrong by inventing the story to which I have just listened."

"I have the honour to repeat, madam, that I am Sir Charles Evander," he said calmly, and with assurance.

"And I, sir, who knew him well, assure you that you in no way resemble the man who you allege was the tragedian of myself, and the murderer of my lamented husband."

Lady Carisbrook spoke with a mournful quietude and self-possession, which was not in the slightest degree affected by the mocking smile with which the repulsive and hideous yellow-faced individual with whom she was talking, regarded her.

"Will you listen to my history, Lady Carisbrook?" he continued; "that is to say, the history of the last months. I promise you that you will not find it uninteresting, and it shall not take up much of your doubtless valuable time in the delivery."

She inclined her head, and in a few words as possible he related what had happened to him, and how he had been treated by Mr. Mordaunt and Lily.

"This is incredible," she said at length; "but if it is matter of fact, I can only say that you have been punished as you deserved. Is it not infamous that you should have been the cause of my husband's death, and that you should have the hardihood or the insolence to boast of the feat here before me—his widow. I am sorry that the chastisement which has been inflicted upon you has not had the effect of rendering you a penitent. You are, it seems, more hardened than before; and though I pray that Heaven may bless my enemies and do good to those who injure me, I cannot wish you any better fate than that which has befallen you. Go, Sir Charles Evander, if that is really your name and title, repent in sackcloth and ashes, and endeavour to atone for the guilt of your misguided life, which has brought upon you the terrible doom which you, perhaps, justly attribute to Mr. Mordaunt, who of all men has the most right to be the avenger of Lily St. Aubyn."

"Thank you for a very pretty and agreeable sermon, Lady Carisbrook," replied Sir Charles Evander, with a light laugh. "It is not often that I trouble the inside of a church, but I should do so oftener if I thought that I should hear such sound doctrines preached by such fair and eloquent lips. If you have any lingering doubts as to the truth of my story, go and seek your friend—my wife—and tell her that she will ere long bitterly repeat her share in the outrage which Mr. Mordaunt has indulged in at my expense."

"In what way can you injure her?" inquired Lady Carisbrook, upon the conviction that she was speaking to Sir Charles Evander, which grew stronger every moment.

"My enemies have forgotten," he answered, "that I have a friend, named Dr. Roy, who is thoroughly acquainted with all vegetable poisons. He has undertaken to cure me in a month; and when my personal appearance is thoroughly restored, rest assured that I will have no mercy upon those who have dared to make me suffer as I have done."

He spoke with a savage earnestness that made her ladyship tremble.

"If this man does recover," she said to herself, "his vengeance will be fearful, for he has no heart, and can feel no pity. I will talk to you no longer," she said, aloud. "For if I were to do as I might use language which I should regret—language, so harsh, that, though just, its violence would be unbecoming a lady, for you are confessedly the murderer of my husband, and you have grossly insulted me by venturing to make the revelation. I hope that your belief in a complete cure may be founded on a fallacy, and sincerely trust that your friend and ally, Dr. Roy, may have deceived himself as to the nature of your malady, and ultimately find himself unable to perform the cure he has led you to believe so easy of accomplishment."

With these words, she bowed in a stately and frigid manner, sweeping from the room and leaving him confounded at the dignity and self-command she displayed under the most trying circumstances.

Evander was satisfied with the consternation he had created, and returned to his hotel before those who had gone to the cemetery could come back. The evening papers contained a full and detailed account of the ceremony, at which Evander smiled.

Dr. Roy was not satisfied with what he had done. It will be remembered that his advice was to remain quiet, and not allow his enemies to guess what he intended to do until he was well and ready to act.

"Mr. Mordaunt and Lady Evander have so much to lose," he observed, "that they will have recourse to any expedient to prevent you re-establishing yourself in your position, and accomplishing their ruin."

"They can do me no further harm, for I am on my guard," replied Evander. "That I have much to fear from their hostility, I admit, but here in London, with you by my side, what can they do?"

"I know not," answered the doctor, with a dubious shake of the head. "My heart misgives me, and when that's the case, I have always reason to expect some misfortune."

Evander laughed contemptuously, in his usual reckless manner, and the subject dropped.

Dr. Roy was very busily engaged in concocting the medicine that was to cure Evander. If everything went on well he fully expected to have the precious drug ready at the time he had promised it to his patient.

The warning which Evander had given Lady Carisbrook had been most injudicious. Both Lily and Mordaunt had expected to be favoured by visits from him, but they did not think he could get anyone to cure the disfigurement under which he was labouring, and therefore did not fear any recognition of him by the world and his former friends.

His declaration about Dr. Roy's skill, and his intention to be terribly revenged in a short time upon his enemies, led them to consider in what way they could thwart him, and compel him to remain in the state to which they had reduced him.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,

"Life is but an empty dream!"

For the soul is dead that slumbers,

And things are not what they seem.

Voices of the Night.

But ah! how false and full of guile

That world, which wore so soft a smile

But to betray!

She, that had been his friend before,

Now from the fated monarch tore

Her charms away. *Coplas de Manrique.*

LADY CARISBROOK detested Sir Charles Evander so thoroughly that she threw herself heart and soul into the cause of those who were hostile to him, and approved of any measures, however harsh, which were calculated to effect the end they had in view, which was to render Evander helpless as a child, and oblige him to continue blotted out from that society of which he had proved himself an unworthy member.

The confession which he had made to the effect that it was he, and he alone, who, by means of an odious and untrue insinuation, had caused Lord Carisbrook to take away his life, maddened her with a frenzied desire for revenge. Instead of concealing his iniquity he had openly boasted of it, and to her. Any man of delicacy and refinement, and with a good heart, would have refrained from making such an admission to a yet sorrowing widow.

He had made for himself one more enemy. Lily, Mordaunt, and Lady Carisbrook were now bound together for one common purpose. They were swayed by the same object, which was to crush and utterly annihilate Evander as they would a poisonous reptile, whose venom they feared.

Mordaunt, as usual, was the one whose opinion had the most weight, and he came to the conclusion that Evander must be prevented, at all hazards, from taking the medicine which Dr. Roy was preparing.

"If," he suggested one evening at the house which had once been Evander's, where Lily had taken up her abode for the present, and where they had met to consider what they should do; "if, when the medicine is fully prepared, some one could obtain possession of and destroy it, our end would be obtained, for the present at least; if not, Dr. Roy must be carried off and placed in confinement in the country."

"We cannot stop since we have gone so far," said Lily; "and though I should regret using any violence or inconvenienting Dr. Roy, he merits such treatment on our part if he espouses the cause of Evander, whose atrocities cannot be unknown to him."

"I will inveigle myself into his confidence," exclaimed Lady Carisbrook, "and undertake to possess myself of the drug upon which he places such faith." They endeavoured to dissuade her from adopting this course, thinking she might run into danger, but her ladyship was determined.

The difficulty she had to encounter at first was that of meeting with Evander in a manner that would

not arouse his suspicions, and accident favoured her in a remarkable way. She heard from a servant of his own, whom she employed as a spy, that he intended to visit the opera on a certain evening. She was present in a box exactly opposite his own. The night was a grand one, and royalty itself honoured the representation with its presence.

Evander swept the house with a powerful lorgnette, and was not slow in discovering Lady Carisbrook. A smile came to her lips as she beheld his glass directed towards her, and deeming this an encouragement to him, he thought she had relented, and with his usual audacity determined to visit her at the close of the first act.

This he did, and was astonished to find that she received him with affability. That she had, with the capriciousness of a woman, forgiven him he could not doubt, but to make sure he asked the question, and she replied:

"Oh, yes; you have suffered much, perhaps deservedly, but I cannot help feeling sorry for you. Mr. Mordaunt and your wife have gone a little too far."

"They will find that out before long, if there is justice to be had in this country, for when I can establish my identity I shall punish them for an infamous conspiracy," he rejoined, vindictively.

"You told me, I think, that you had a fair hope of being able to do so soon?" said her ladyship, with a winning smile.

"Yes. In a week from to-day I am promised the means of curing myself, which will make me white and restore to me my personal appearance, such as I had when you knew me, in less than a month."

"Is it easy to make this drug?"

"No. On the contrary, my doctor tells me that had he not brought three particular kinds of herbs from India with him, he could not have procured them in Europe, and a journey to the East would have been necessary in order to get them and perfect the medicine I am to take. All those herbs—that is, all the doctor has—are used in his decoction, so that I trust the precious medicine will have the efficacy he attributes to it, or I shall have to go to the East before I can complete my scheme of vengeance."

"Will you not forgive your wife, if only to save the scandal that must ensue?" asked Lady Carisbrook.

"The greater the scandal and the more complete the exposure the better for me," replied Evander, vehemently. "Do you not see that my death has been publicly proclaimed, and in order to account for my sudden re-appearance in the land of the living the whole story must be told. I am informed that a conspiracy such as that in which Mr. Mordaunt and the lady you call my wife have engaged in, is punishable with a sentence of fourteen years' imprisonment, under the disheartening circumstances of hard labour and solitary confinement. That is the revenge that I look forward to, and when they are both convicted and taken away to put on the felon's dress, with despair in their hearts, I shall feel that I have triumphed at last."

"Let me try to reconcile you," said Lady Carisbrook; "do not refuse me this privilege. I will speak to your wife, and visit you at your hotel, if you will allow me."

Evander gave the required permission, but he declared that any attempt at a reconciliation would be futile, as he was fully determined to punish his enemies as he thought they deserved.

A glorious burst of music ushering in the second act put an end to their conversation, and Evander returned to his box.

Lady Carisbrook, however, had done all she wished to do. She had gained permission to call at his hotel without exciting his suspicion, and she did not doubt she would have an opportunity of abstracting the medicine before he could use it.

She called once or twice in her character of peace-maker, and reported some imaginary conversation which she had had with Lily, to which Evander listened attentively, refusing always to make any terms. Towards the end of the interview she inquired respecting the progress of the medicine, which she could not see anywhere.

When her third visit was about to expire and she had risen to go, after deploring the implacability of Evander's temper, the latter exclaimed:

"Go back to your employers, madam, and tell them that the time for their punishment approaches. The medicine is ready, and I have but to take it to be restored to my former condition and appearance. No longer shall I be loathsome to my fellow creatures, hideous to all mankind, and as I am now. See," he added, slamming back the door of an ebony cupboard fixed to the wall, "there is the phial upon which my hopes are founded."

Lady Carisbrook followed the direction of his hand and saw a large bottle, which contained a dark fluid.

On a label affixed to the bottle was written, "Sir Charles Evander; the antidote."

A mocking smile sat on Evander's lips, and he evidently looked forward with confidence to the virtue of this drug or compound of drugs.

With the rapidity of lightning Lady Carisbrook darted forward, and, passing by Evander before he could stop her progress, seized the bottle, and with a wild laugh dashed it down at her feet, breaking the fragile glass into a thousand pieces, and scattering the precious medicine, which was soon absorbed by the carpet.

Evander, perfectly prostrated by this bold act, sank back into a chair, glaring wildly at Lady Carisbrook, whose life at that moment he would gladly have taken. He had not suspected her of treachery, but allowed his vanity to flatter him with the belief that she felt an interest in and a pity for him, since he had fallen a victim to the malice of his enemies.

"What have you done?" he cried. "The loss of this medicine cannot be replaced. You have ruined me, for I shall have to go abroad to get the materials for a fresh antidote. Oh, this is too much! My revenge was in my grasp, and it has vanished like an empty dream!"

He threw out his hands and clutched the empty air, uttering frantic cries the while, and Lady Carisbrook enjoyed his discomfiture. She felt that it was some slight atonement for her husband's death.

"I vowed myself to the accomplishment of what I have just done," she said, "and I feel no more compassion for you now than you did for me or my husband—the best of men—when you relentlessly hurried him into eternity. Now, Sir Charles Evander, your wife and Mr. Mordaunt can laugh at your threats, and I will leave you to do your worst."

She was about to quit the apartment, leaving Evander gnashing his teeth with impotent rage, when the door opened, and Dr. Roy, who had been listening outside to what was taking place, entered.

"Not so fast, madam," he exclaimed. "Permit me to say a few words before you go. I suspected what your object was in coming hither in the garb of a peace-maker, and I took my measures accordingly."

"Well, sir?" demanded Lady Carisbrook, who began to fear that she had not, perhaps, been so successful as she hoped and expected.

Evander, too, looked up with interest, as if he fondly fancied that a gleam of encouragement and solace might lurk in the doctor's words.

"That bottle which you have destroyed, madam," answered Dr. Roy, "contained nothing but a colourless fluid of no virtue whatever. The real antidote is still in my possession, and will be administered with my own hands to Sir Charles Evander."

Lady Carisbrook's countenance fell.

Evander sprang up, and seizing the doctor's hand, wrung it heartily, saying:

"How can I thank you for saving me from being the dupe of this woman?"

"By avoiding her society in future, and not being guilty of the fatal folly of putting your trust in anybody but me. I have a professional pride in curing you, and an interested motive in restoring you to your patrimony, as you owe me money, and my fee will be a large one, which you can only pay by being once more placed in the enjoyment of your property."

Opening the door, Evander, who had recovered his equanimity and presence of mind, wished Lady Carisbrook farewell in a bantering tone, and she, completely crestfallen, could not utter another word, though she made several efforts to speak, and she took her departure in silent ignominy, outwitted by the foresight of Dr. Roy.

"Yes, my young friend," said the doctor, when they were by themselves. "I suspected some treachery, and I took my precautions. Your medicine is safe, and you shall have it to-morrow morning, as it will be best for you not to take so powerful a drug at night."

"Doctor," rejoined Evander, "you are my only friend, and I cannot thank you too much for your kindness. You have saved me from a great danger, and I shall be glad if you will tell me why you care for me when my character seems to be so repulsive to others."

Dr. Roy laughed in a peculiar manner, and exclaimed:

"I do not care for you in the least, but I wish to restore you to your place in society because you are a new type of character. I study you, as I have studied human nature all my life; but hitherto, every man, however cruel, brutal, and callous, with whom I have come in contact, has had some tender emotion to show that he was not quite heartless, but you are utterly incapable of entertaining any sentiment of pity; in fact, you have no heart, no feeling; you are an unique specimen, and, as I observed before, I study you. Do you think it possible I could have the slightest regard for you?"

Not I. Your attainments are not scholarly, and you are nobody's friend, but I study you, and am rewarded for my pains."

Evander smiled but faintly.
"Do you know doctor, that you insult me. If I did not find you useful, just now, I should not allow your language to pass unchastised. I will wait, however," he said.

In the evening Sir Charles Evander went out to enjoy a new play in his character of an Indian nabob, and Dr. Roy remained at home; for an hour he sat smoking a long Turkish pipe filled with aromatic tobacco, and plunged in thought. His meditations were interrupted by the entry of a servant, who said:

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir."

"Their names?" demanded the doctor.

"They gave none," replied the servant.

The doctor was about to request the cards of his visitors, when the door opened and two gentlemen pushed past the servant; one seemed to lead, the other to follow.

"Your business with me, gentlemen?" inquired the doctor.

"Cannot be communicated before a servant," replied the foremost stranger.

Dr. Roy made a sign to the servant to withdraw, which he did at once, closing the door after him. One man immediately locked the door inside and put the key in his pocket, the other jumped on a chair and cut off the bell rope as high as he could reach. These preparations alarmed the doctor very much, but finding his retreat cut off and that it would be vain to call for assistance, he remained in his chair and awaited the sequel of the adventure.

The man who had cut off the bell rope made a noise in one end, which he threw over the doctor's neck, pulling it tight enough to make him feel the cord next his skin, then he stood behind the chair, as if awaiting the orders of his superior.

All this had been done with the utmost rapidity, and Dr. Roy could scarcely believe that it was all real.

The leader now exclaimed:

"My name, sir, is Frederick Mordaunt. I think its mention will to some extent explain the object of my visit. Shall I be more explicit? Lady Carisbrook failed to obtain some miraculous medicine you have in your possession. I trust I shall be more fortunate."

A light burst upon the doctor, whose concern increased, and so great was his agitation that big drops of perspiration hung like beads upon his forehead.

(To be continued.)

SOME curious statistics, with reference to the speed of wind and sound, may be interesting just at the present moment. A zephyr travels at the rate of 1½ miles per hour; fresh breeze, 4; strong wind, 12; tempest, 45; hurricane, 60; a great secret, 80; calumn y, 100; scandal, 120.

THE HIGH TIDES.—The extraordinary tide of Wednesday, 3rd November, has been productive of great damage, and reports from all parts of the Thames concur in stating that it was the highest for many years. As no previous intimation had been given of its probable occurrence, the inhabitants of houses in the low-lying districts from Gravesend up to Putney were totally unprepared to resist the inroads made by it. As soon as it had risen three feet above Trinity high-water mark people began to be sensible of danger; but in most cases it was then too late to make preparations to stop its progress, and the water found its way into a large number of houses by the doors, and rushed like a cataract into underground kitchens and cellars. Below Battersea the ground floors of several small houses were covered with water before the furniture could be removed, and still further up market gardens and large plots of ground are under water. The large houses on the banks of the river near Fulham were greatly damaged, the water rising above the lawns. In several of the wharves lower down a large quantity of dry goods was destroyed, and at Millbank, where the Metropolitan Board of Works are now constructing a main sewer, the cuttings were inundated and great damage was done. It is said that the completion of the works will be much retarded in consequence. The water also rose over the Custom-house quay, and carried the new steamboat piers on the Embankment above the level of the pathway. The piers, however, have not sustained any damage. A large number of boats, besides timber and other property, were washed away by the tide, and a barge was driven by its strength against one of the buttresses of Vauxhall-bridge and sank. On the morning of November 4th, between one and two o'clock, there was another high tide, but little damage was done, but in the afternoon much excitement prevailed among the inhabitants of waterside dwellings, consequent upon the expectation of a still higher rise of the tide than that which occurred

on Wednesday. Long before it was high water at London-bridge (2 o'clock) numbers of persons assembled on the Embankment and bridges to watch its rise, and in the districts most liable to damage from floods the doors were barricaded with pieces of timber. The wind blew with the full force of a gale from the north-west, but the water did not rise above Trinity mark, and therefore but little of it found its way into the thoroughfares, and no damage was done. On the same morning the tide in the Mersey, which was at its height at half-past 11, was raised by a strong north-west gale to much beyond the expected height, and the river was very rough. At New Brighton, near the mouth of the river, the bridge connecting the pier with the pontoon landing stage was carried away, but fortunately no person was hurt.

THE TEST OF GUILT.

I HAD been sowing a crop of "wild oats" rather extensively. When old Grumley placed my little fortune of five thousand pounds in my hands, and told me I was my own master, I felt a degree of exhilaration in keeping with this change of circumstances, and I thought the sage admonitions which he lavished so freely upon me at the same time entirely superfluous. He had held a tight rein over me during the long term of his guardianship, and now that the bit was beneath my teeth, I was determined to go my own gait.

Only twenty-one, with a good education, and five thousand pounds in my possession, I felt like taking the world easy for a short time before I settled upon a profession, as I had not yet made up my mind what to be, a doctor, a lawyer, or an editor, and I did not think there was any need to be in a hurry. I wanted to see a little of life, and my experience at college, among some of the madcaps there, had given me a strong desire to adventure into the great world beyond.

Walter Brainard, my especial chum, suggested that we should "do London" for a week or so, on his way home for the vacation. I closed with the proposal at once. I had never visited the great metropolis, and was anxious to do so; but he had been there often, and was well acquainted. He promised to show me "the ropes." He did. Let me not anticipate.

I merely took with me a small carpet-bag, containing a change of clothes and a few necessary articles, and about eight hundred pounds.

In one week I got rid of five hundred pounds, felt in love, and got into a terrific fight. You will admit I was expeditious enough. The way I fell in love was this:

Walter's friend gave him an invitation, and permission to bring an acquaintance, to a grand party he was about to give. The guests were expected to come in fancy costumes, and there were to be private theatricals and dancing and a great supper.

"A *récherché* affair," said Walter; "lots of pretty girls, and very select."

He took me to a costumier in Regent Street, and we selected our costumes. He chose the dress of a cardinal; I that of a cavalier of the reign of Charles II. I had rather a good figure, and I was anxious to show it to advantage.

The night came, and we went. The large rooms were thronged with a most brilliant assemblage. There was every conceivable character represented. Walter introduced me to a number of notables, who rather dazzled my youthful ignorance, without creating any very lasting impression, and I accidentally made the acquaintance of a young lady dressed as "Spring," who took my heart captive in a quarter of an hour. I shall not attempt to describe her. I thought her the handsomest girl I ever saw, and I am still of that opinion. Others might not have thought so—everybody's idea of beauty is not the same, which is a fortunate thing for some people.

In a short time we were conversing together as freely as if we had known each other for years. There is not much ceremony or reserve between eighteen and twenty-one. We exchanged confidences. I told her my name and residence, and, in return, she informed me that her name was Edith Nones. She resided with a married sister, whose husband owned a large coal mine in Durham. At present, however, she was stopping with an aunt in London. She gave me an invitation to call upon her, which I gladly accepted. I was desperately smitten with her, and fancied she was rather pleased with me.

I devoted myself to her for the whole evening, escorting her to the supper-table, and doing the gallant in every possible way. She left before we did. The aunt was there, by the way, a Mrs. Forbush, a fine-looking old lady, to whom I was introduced. I cloaked them and put them into their carriage. The rooms seemed desolate when she was gone—my fun was over for that evening.

"Let's go home," I said to Walter.

"It's about time," he answered. "It's getting slow. Say, old boy, I think you've made an impression."

"Pshaw!" I returned, and I felt that I was blushing like a girl.

"Nice girl, that Edith Nones," he rattled on, in his careless way; "a good catch, too. I have been making some inquiries about her; got some money—she and her sister came in for about fifty thousand between them at the old man's death. Go in and win!"

We went home together—that is, when I say "home" I mean to the hotel—in very good spirits.

I called the next afternoon upon Edith; found her alone in a cosy little parlour that looked out upon a garden—had a long chat with her upon different subjects, and left her with my good opinion strengthened, and feeling strongly inclined to adopt Walter's advice, and try to win her. I hesitated a little over this important step, as I did not think I had seen sufficient of life to settle down into a sober married man. The free-and-easy life I had been leading for the last few days had been very exhilarating, and I wanted to have a little more of it. I got it, with a vengeance, that very night.

Walter had picked up a friend, a sallow-complexioned man, with piercing dark eyes, and splendid black hair and full beard, apparently about thirty years of age, who went by the name of Parks. He was very gentlemanly, had delicate white hands, and wore a profusion of rings. One of them, on the little finger of the right hand, was a peculiar seal ring, with some device cut upon the stone. I remember one day trying to examine this ring, but he would not let me, turning the stone inside his hand, with some playful remark about curiosity. Of course I did not press it, but the circumstance struck me as being a little odd at the time. Where Walter picked this man up I do not know, but I noticed that whenever we were in his company our steps were invariably directed to some haunt of vice.

On the night in question he introduced us into the most fashionable and frequented gambling-house—a marble-front building, with plate-glass doors, with a very conspicuous gold number upon them, and fitted up in what might truly be called a "palatial" style. After passing through the long corridor and two doors—which opened slowly, as if the entrance was vigilantly guarded, though I saw no one but a couple of very sedate-looking men—and up a flight of stone steps, we emerged into a hall, resplendent with gas chandeliers, plate-glass mirrors, long tables, and elegant sideboards, covered with decanters of choice wines and dainty little baskets holding the most fragrant Havannah cigars.

The room was comfortably full, and "faro" and "roulette" were in full operation, but everything was conducted in a quiet and orderly manner. Attentive waiters in snowy white jackets, flitted noiselessly about, supplying the gamblers at the table with liquors and cigars. To my inexperienced eyes it was like a scene from fairy land. We took a drink—the best Madeira I ever tasted—as a preliminary, and then watched the progress of the game. I was leaning over the chair of an old fellow who appeared to have been playing a vigorous game, and with rather poor success. He looked like a farmer from the country, being much more coarsely dressed than those around him, and his features bore evidence of having been exposed to rather rough weather. He had a pile of round pieces of ivory, or some kind of bone, with a red ring round the edge, and a red figure 5 in the centre, before him, and he kept placing them on different cards that were fastened to a green cloth—one of each denomination in the pack—whilst the dealer opposite was sliding over cards from a square silver box, just large enough to hold a pack, and contrived in some manner so as to pass but one card at a time.

"That's 'faro,'" whispered Walter. "That's what they call 'bucking against the tiger.'"

I asked him where they kept the "tiger," and he gave me an indescribable leer as he answered:

"Just you stake ten pounds on one of those cards, and you'll feel his claws."

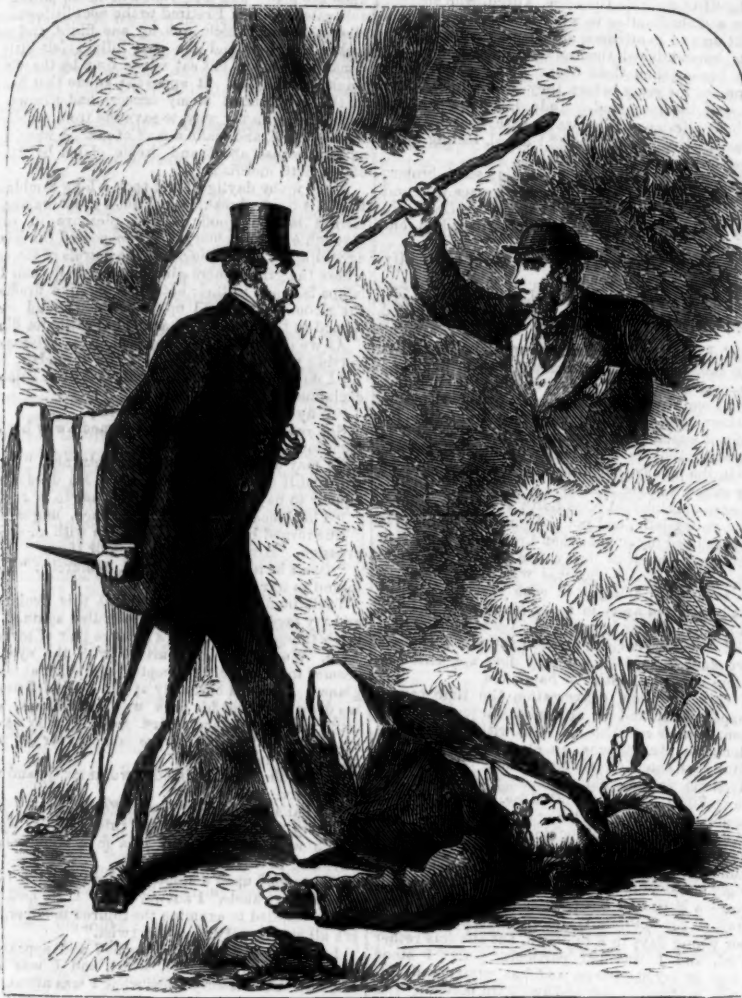
"Yes," said the old fellow, who overheard us, looking up in my face—he had just staked his last ivory chip and lost—"that's true, neighbour. This 'ore fighting the tiger is the surest thing out."

"How sure?" I asked, in surprise.

"The more you put down the less you'll take up," was his answer.

He grinned at me in a ghastly, cadaverous sort of manner, got up, made for a decanter labelled "whiskey," poured out a generous portion into a glass, drank it off as it had been so much water, and walked quietly out of the room.

A whole moral essay against gambling could not have had more effect upon me, at the time, than these few quaint words. I recognised their point at once, and resolved that I would put down nothing. Parks



[THE RESCUE.]

appeared very much chagrined at this determination upon my part, though I was at a loss to understand why it should trouble him, as my losses or gains would not affect his pocket; yet that it did trouble him was quite apparent even to my unsophisticated eyes.

Finding that I was resolutely bent upon abstaining from the game, and that Walter was of the same inclination, under some pretext or other he got us out of the gambling-house. Our next stopping-place was in some private supper-rooms. My brain was reeling under the effects of the numerous potations, and, literally speaking, I was full of the "old Harry." Like a great many other young men fresh to London life, I was in for a "high old time"—and I had it.

At the supper-rooms Parks found a friend, a small, dapper-looking man, with curling brown hair, and a splendid moustache—in fact a splendid-looking fellow, with a jovial manner, and a rakish appearance altogether—a man that, if I had been perfectly sober, I should have avoided as a dangerous character—one of those elegant human panthers who are always ready to pounce upon verdant young men from the country. I took him for a jolly good fellow on that occasion, and fraternized with him at once. Parks introduced him to us under the name of Shirley, and whispered confidentially in my ear that he belonged to one of the first families in the city. I felt rather proud of the honour of knowing this young man. We exchanged tokens of mutual esteem before we parted.

Parks had been badgering me all the evening about my timidity in refusing to play at "faro," and asked me if I could play "everlasting" in that sarcastic, taunting manner so extremely annoying to young men just taking their first experience of life, and who wish to be thought very worldly-wise. I told him that I could not only play "everlasting," but that I would bet him fifty pounds that I could beat

him three out of five games at whist. He accepted at once, and we all sat down to cards in a private room—which appeared to have been expressly arranged for the purpose—Walter and I partners against Parks and Shirley.

More liquor was ordered, and we commenced the game. Shirley dealt, and I was sober enough to see that he manipulated the cards with his dainty white fingers in a very dexterous and skilful manner. He was evidently an old hand at the business. We lost the first game; I dealt for the second, and we won it. Parks dealt next, and I observed that he handled the cards in precisely the same manner that Shirley did, and on the little finger of his right hand, as he threw off the cards, glistened the peculiar seal ring he wore—a large stone, of a blood colour, with some device carved upon it. I bent over (with a strange curiosity for which I cannot account) and glanced at the device upon the stone. He drew his hand quickly away with an annoyed, angry look, and turned the stone to the palm of his hand, as he had done once before; but my eyes had been too quick for him. I had deciphered the inscription; it was an initial formed by the two capital letters A and B twisted curiously together.

"What does A B stand for?" I asked, rather enjoying his annoyance, and determined to let him know that I had seen the inscription, despite his precautions.

"Any-Body!" he answered, shortly.

Everybody laughed, and the game proceeded; but I could see that Parks would have been better pleased if I had not read the letters engraved upon this ring. The game proceeded, but it was just like open and shut; when we dealt we won; and when they dealt they won—only there was this difference: when we dealt they had some trick cards in their hands; but when they dealt we never took a trick at all. As they had the lead in dealing, they won every fifth game, and, unfortunately for us, that was the game

on which the stakes depended. Before I hardly knew what I was about, I had lost three hundred pounds. I was satisfied that I had been cheated, and I became enraged. The liquor with which I had been plied made me belligerent.

I accused Parks of the cheat; he denied it indignantly. I started up suddenly and caught him by the arm, and an ace fell out of his right sleeve. He grew furious at this detection, applied some epithet which I did not relish, and I knocked him down. Shirley sprang to his feet, and drew a revolver upon me. Before he could fire, Walter seized a tumbler from the table and hurled it at him. It took effect between his eyes, and Shirley crashed down to the floor, the revolver exploding in the fall.

"The quicker we get out of this the better," cried Walter.

I was decidedly of his opinion. He made a bolt for the door, and I followed him. We met a waiter hurrying along the passage.

"What's the matter?" he asked, sleepily. It was past one o'clock.

"Nothing," answered Walter, coolly. "One of our party dropped his revolver. They will settle in there—we're going home."

The waiter grinned—he evidently knew that we were a couple of pigeons who had been well plucked. We sauntered through the passage leisurely, though our hearts were beating, but the moment we got upon the pavement in the open air, we turned down the first corner, into a bye-street, and made good speed towards our hotel. We did not hold much conversation until, safe in our own room, with the door locked, we held a consultation over "the situation."

"We have got into the devil's own scrape," began Walter, dolefully.

"It looks like it," I answered, in the same key.

"I wonder if I killed that fellow?" he continued, thoughtfully.

"I should not be surprised," I returned. "It was a heavy cut-glass tumbler; it struck him full in the forehead."

"Curse the fellow!" he cried, vexatiously; "not but what I think he deserved all I gave him, but who wants to be hauled up on a charge of manslaughter—that's the worst they can make of it. My folks would feel awful about it. Tell you what, old boy; we must get out of this as soon as possible. Got any place where you could hide away for a short time?"

After a moment's reflection I answered:

"Yes."

"You see," continued Walter, "they couldn't prove much against us any way, as Parks was *non-compos*—that was a scientific rap you gave him—before I hit this—what's his name—Shirley; only they can put us under bonds, and worry us; so we had better get out of London before they catch us. I don't think they will make much of a hunt for us, and I will try to compromise matters with Parks, and the affair will soon blow over. Where do you think of going—home?"

"By no means," I answered, quickly; "that is just where they would be likely to look for me. I shall go to Durham."

"Got some friends there?"

"Yes."

"The very thing."

We laid down in our clothes for an hour or so, for it was already near daylight, then packed our carpet-bags, settled our bill at the hotel, and getting into an omnibus, were whirled down to the station. Walter shook hands, and we parted; it was quite a time before I saw him again.

When Walter had asked me if I had anywhere to go, the idea suddenly flashed through my mind that I would go to Durham. It was Edith Nones' home, and I need scarcely admit that she was the magnet that attracted me thither. She had told me that she expected to return home in a day or two. What I purposed by this unauthorised visit is beyond my power to say. I merely felt an irresistible desire to be near her, to gaze upon her, drink in the loveliness of her features, bask in the sunshine of her eyes, and listen to the melody of her voice.

Seated in the carriage, lulled by the monotonous rattle and whirr of the wheels, I indulged in a most delicious day-dream as we were rolled speedily along. There came a jolt, a crash; the roof of the carriage suddenly became the floor; down the embankment it went, finally landing on its side. There were shrieks of pain, cries of dismay, and exclamations of astonishment, mingled with the crash and thumping as the accident took place. I clambered through the broken window and gained the ground, finding, to my great surprise, that I had received no material injury, and had escaped with a few bruises and a good shaking up. Others were not so fortunate, and many harrowing sights met my gaze as I surveyed the scene of disaster. Let me omit the details—I have no taste for horrors.

Two of the carriages—the rear ones—by some de-

feet in the rail, had been thrown from the line. The one in which I was had been pretty well smashed up; the other, which had remained beside the track, and had not been thrown down the embankment, was not seriously damaged. Cries of alarm, amongst which I recognised female voices, proceeded from it. I hastened to the assistance of the inmates. I clambered up the steps and forced open the door, which had got wedged together somehow, and handed out the affrighted women and children. None appeared to have received any serious injury. The last lady that came gave a glad start of surprise as I assisted her out, and my astonishment was so great that I nearly dropped her. She was Edith Nones.

I could but think it a singular circumstance that she, who had occupied such a prominent place in my thoughts during the journey, should have been upon the train unknown to me.

"Why, Mr. McVeigh," she exclaimed, "is it you?"

As I could not deny it, I did not attempt to. Indeed I never was at such a loss for words in my life.

"What in the world brings you here?" she continued, as I remained silent, trying to think what plausible motive I could invent for my journey.

I stammered out something about having a strong curiosity to visit the coal regions and inspect their wonders. She gave me an arch glance out of her soft, dove-like eyes, and I had a strong suspicion that she more than half suspected the truth. I blushed to my very temples, and attempted to turn the conversation by speaking of the frequency of railroad accidents at the time. She shuddered, and drew her veil over her face. The uninjured portion of the train had been backed down to the scene of the disaster, and the wounded were being conveyed to the nearest station, which, I heard a gentleman say, was a little over a mile ahead. We got in the train with the rest, and I took a seat beside her. The train moved slowly on again, and, as always happens, the uninjured soon forgot the peril through which they had passed.

"If you are merely sight-seeing among our hills," began Edith, when we were once more on our way, "I trust you will not refuse to make my sister's house your stopping-place while you remain. I need scarcely assure you that any friend of mine will be made welcome."

"If you count me among your friends already," I returned, gallantly, overjoyed at such an opportunity of being placed on so familiar a footing with my fair *inamorata*, "I shall most certainly accept your kind invitation."

The rich blood glowed ruddily in her cheeks, and she turned away her head under pretence of looking out of the window; but she did not appear to be displeased, which I took as encouraging. I certainly was very far gone, and I could not help showing it.

"You will find my sister very amiable," she said, after a slight pause, resuming the conversation; "and Mr. Briscoe, her husband, is a most genial gentleman. It was a love-match between them, and though they have been married six years, they are more like a pair of lovers now than a married couple."

"Have they any children?" I asked, casually.

"No; they have lost two—and that seems to draw them nearer to each other," responded Edith.

I soon discovered that she was devotedly attached to this sister, her senior by some five years, and was never tired of talking of her.

"Thomas Briscoe was quite a poor man when *Hermia* married him," Edith went on, with charming confidence, "and our friends thought it rather a poor match for her, thinking, with her money, she might have looked higher, and found some one better; but she had known him from a boy—he was her heart's choice, and as she was her own mistress no one could gainsay her. The marriage was the making of him, and he is not ashamed to own it. I have often heard him say he owed all to his wife. She gave him the money to buy a share in the mine, and he eventually became the sole owner, for he is a most energetic and prudent man, and has great business tact. They say now he is worth a hundred thousand pounds, and he has paid *Hermia* back what she advanced, and her property is all in her own name."

I conceived a great admiration for this Mr. Thomas Briscoe, and was anxious to make his acquaintance. I like these men who carve out their own fortunes. I intended to do something of the sort myself. Perhaps you may think I had not made a very promising commencement, but do not judge me too quickly; I merely wished to see just a little of the gay world before I settled down into a studious, sober man of business. Since I had met Edith I did not care how soon I settled down.

"Mr. Briscoe comes of a hard-working race, I presume?" I observed.

"Perhaps he does," returned Edith, "but he seems to be the only one of the race who has inherited the family virtue."

"How so?" I asked, in surprise. "Has he relatives?"

"One only, a brother—an elder brother—the pet of too indulgent parents. While Thomas was only thought fit to work in the mine, Alfred, who seemed to have a disinclination to work from his cradle, was brought up as a gentleman, and sent to college. His parents impoverished themselves to place him in a sphere higher than their own. Thomas was their sole support for years before they died, while Alfred never sent them a pound. Indeed, I know he has made heavy drains on Thomas's purse repeatedly."

"Does he live in Durham?" I asked, feeling quite interested in this family history.

"Oh, no; he lives in London. He is a stock-broker, or something of that sort. Always dresses well and lives in good style. He visits us quite often. He is very civil and agreeable. *Hermia* likes him, but I—I don't."

It appeared to me that Edith was about to qualify her dislike by some other term.

"Why don't you like him?" I asked, rather impudently, I own, but her very frankness encouraged me.

"Oh! I can't say," she answered, indifferently. "Who can account for a woman's likes or dislikes? Old lawyer Butler said a strange thing to me one day: 'Tom thinks of taking his brother Alfred in as partner,' said he, 'and you just prevent it.' He would not explain, but I know he thinks Alfred is not over scrupulous. He thinks he ought to have a share in the money that has been made, though he never raised a finger to do it."

I began to think that Miss Edith Nones was a long-headed young lady, and not to be made a fool of. I rather damped my hopes when I reflected that, rich as I thought myself with my five thousand—minus about five hundred—she was worth five times as much as I was. I began to wish that her fortune might be spirited away in some mysterious manner so as not to be a bar between us. I was young then, as I have said—generous and romantic to a degree. I have since learned that money does not seriously interfere either with love or happiness.

In this desultory conversation the time passed pleasantly away, and we arrived at our journey's end without further accident. I went with Edith to the residence of Mr. Briscoe, an elegant mansion, delightfully situated on rising ground. Mrs. Briscoe received me very cordially, glancing with a peculiar smile at Edith as she introduced me. I must explain the cause of the risk of being thought vain; but, hang it! in these days of looking-glasses a man cannot help knowing how he looks. I was a pretty fair specimen of a manhood, with my Scottish blood strongly marked in form and feature. My old grandmother—a Mr. Gregor—always said I looked like a portrait of Sir William Wallace, which she had seen in her young days in Edinburgh, but she was rather partial, and I was her particular pet. I stood six feet in my stockings, and was pretty well developed, a little angular and awkward perhaps, with my long arms and longer legs, but that was to wear off with the greenness of youth. I was broad across, and possessed of great strength, more than the shambling appearance of my limbs betokened; but vigorous exercises in rowing, playing ball, and other out-door sports, had strengthened and developed my muscles. I had a ruddy complexion, curly light brown hair, and a mild blue eye that gave very little token of the spirit of mischief within. I was good-natured to a fault, but quick to resent an insult. In short, I was a gentle sort of a Tartar. There, having stood for my portrait, I will descend from the platform and go on with my story.

The glance that Mrs. Briscoe bestowed upon her sister said, as plainly as a glance could:

"Edith, you have brought your beau."

And as her eyes again wandered to my face, I rather thought she approved her sister's choice. This strengthened the good opinion that I had already formed of her—an opinion which I shall hold to the last. A more thoroughly good and womanly woman than *Hermia* Briscoe never breathed upon the earth. There was a great similarity between the sisters—Mrs. Briscoe looking more maternally, but scarcely any older—they had the same wealth of black hair, pale, regular features, and dark gray eyes. Both were of medium height, neither too tall nor too short.

Mr. Briscoe was not at home. He had gone to Liverpool to cash some heavy drafts, intending to make some important alterations in the mine, and wishing to place the money in the local bank so as to have it ready when wanted for use. It was quite a large sum—nearly ten thousand pounds. They spoke of it as a mere trifle, and I began to realise that though my five thousand was a large sum in my eyes, in other eyes it might appear quite insignificant.

We grew very sociable together, and I felt quite at home. Edith took me out for a walk through the town, which I thought quite a thriving place. The next day she promised to take me into the mine. We

had a delightful evening, devoted almost entirely to music. Both sisters were accomplished performers upon the piano, and had voices of much power, well cultivated. When I retired to the neat little chamber allotted to me, which was up one flight, and overlooked the river and the coal hills, I felt little inclination to sleep, but sat a long time by the window thinking of Edith. It appeared to me that heaven, in the very outset of my career, had thrown this gentle being in my way, to save me from an idle and dissolute life, and make a man of me. I went to bed at last, to toss about and dream of her by fits and starts, until morning.

I was up by daylight, and took a long ramble over the hills before breakfast. I am a great walker, and always take a good deal of pleasure in roving through sylvan scenery. We inspected the mine as agreed upon, descending into the bowels of the earth, where the grim miners glided about, with their little lamps fastened to their hats, looking like fireflies in the gloom. This used up the forenoon, and we returned to the house with a good appetite for dinner.

As we drew near we descried Mrs. Briscoe conversing with a gentleman upon the verandah.

"I do believe there's that odious Alfred Briscoe!" exclaimed Edith, variably.

"Why odious?" I asked, covertly.

She reddened a little as she turned away her eyes from mine.

"I may as well tell you," she returned, "for you will find it out soon enough now. He does me the honour to pay court to me, and wishes to marry me."

"The deuce he does!" I exclaimed, unguardedly.

She turned her eyes full upon me with an arch expression. It was my turn to colour then.

"Don't be alarmed," she said, demurely; "I don't intend to have him."

I felt immeasurably relieved at this declaration, and my face showed it, and she smiled again. I have often thought since what a strange pair of lovers we were. We did all our courting with the eyes, and seemed to have tacitly accepted each other at the first glance. I looked curiously at Mr. Alfred Briscoe as we drew near, but his back was towards us, and I could not see his face. Mrs. Briscoe, who saw us, evidently told him we were coming, for he turned quickly around.

"Thunder!" I exclaimed, involuntarily, and stopping short.

"What's the matter?" cried Edith, turning to me, and very much astonished at this singular epithet, which was about as near as a man could come to swearing in a lady's presence.

"I stepped upon a stone, and I do believe I have sprained my ankle," I answered, as I stooped down and pretended to examine the injured member. "No, it's all right—only gave it a twist."

I tried my best to collect myself and appear calm, but my brain was all in a whirl, and I was so astonished that I hardly knew what I was about. The recognition had been mutual, as his eyes met mine. It would have been hard to say which was the most astonished man of the two. This gentleman conversing with Mrs. Briscoe was Parks, the sharper I had knocked down in the supper-rooms in London. It was not a pleasant meeting upon either side. He certainly never expected to meet me there, and I as certainly never expected to meet him. And this was Alfred Briscoe. The initials A. B. upon the stone of his ring were no longer a mystery.

I never felt more awkward in my life, but I knew my best plan was to meet the affair boldly, and treat him as an entire stranger. If he chose to bring up the matter, it would be more to his discredit than mine. By the time we reached the verandah I had become quite cool and collected. There was not the slightest apparent sign of recognition, unless it was perhaps just a quiver of the eyelids as we were presented to each other. No one would have imagined for a moment that we had ever met before. I could not help thinking what a consummate pair of hypocrites we both were. There was one thing, however, I prided myself upon: experienced man of the world as he was, I, a stripling, a mere tyro in life's mysteries, was his equal in coolness and self-possession.

Treating me with the most marked consideration and respect outwardly, he took every occasion, covertly, to make me appear in a ridiculous light before the ladies, flinging little quiet sarcasms at me in a way that could not be resented without making me appear unreasonably hot-headed and sensitive. I rather enjoyed this keen encounter of our wits, for I gave him as good as he sent, as it proved he was annoyed at Edith's evident liking for my society. The ladies had no suspicion of the ill-feeling existing between us. Edith looked a little surprised at some of his sneers, and seemed disposed to resent them. She more than suspected this man's true character, and respect for her sister's feelings alone made her treat him with common politeness. He could not influence her against me—that was one comfort.

Mrs. Briscoe received a telegram from her husband, stating that he would be home by the evening train.

"He will be here by nine o'clock to-night," she said. "He always walks from the station."

I remarked that I thought it a risk to run, he having so much money about him, her house being on the outskirts of the town, and some portions of the way quite lonely. I had observed that in my walks about the place.

"Oh, there is no danger," she answered, lightly.

"Is he armed?" I asked.

"He never carried a weapon in his life," she returned. "Do you?"

"Not exactly," I made answer. "I have one—though I do not carry it about me—an heirloom in our family, a relic of the olden time—a Scottish dirk that belonged to a namesake of mine, Malcolm McVeigh, a corporal in the celebrated Highland Regiment, known as the 'Black Watch,' that was so distinguished at the battle of Dettingen. I have it upstairs in my carpet-bag."

The ladies expressed a desire to see it, and I went for the dirk, and brought it down for their examination. Alfred Briscoe was present when this conversation took place, and he examined the dirk critically. After their curiosity was satisfied, I carried it back to my chamber.

I stopped awhile to make some change in my apparel, intending to take a long walk after dinner. Returning downstairs, I found Edith alone in the parlour, looking, I thought, out of sorts, as if something had ruffled the natural serenity of her temper. "What's the matter?" I asked, taking a place beside her on the sofa.

"I've settled it," she cried, petulantly. "I've settled it for good and all!"

"Have you? Well, I am glad to hear that; but what have you settled?"

She smiled, and her good humour came back again.

"Mr. Alfred Briscoe proposed to me ten minutes ago, and I rejected him."

"And he vows vengeance, I presume?"

"Oh, no—he would never dare to threaten me. Covertly, he would work me mischief if he could. It is a great disappointment to him, I know, as he is very anxious to have the spending of my money."

"Edith, I wish you did not have any money," I cried, suddenly.

"Why?" she demanded, in surprise.

"Because I don't wish to be accused of mercenary motives—don't you see?"

"But why should you be?"

"Well—I have been thinking—for some little time—that—I—should like to marry you myself."

"Well, Malcolm?"

"But the confounded money makes it look as if it wasn't love that swayed me, entirely and purely."

"I think we can get over that difficulty," she said, quietly. "After we are married I will give it away."

"To whom?" I asked.

"To you, dear," she said, with a most provoking smile.

My only reply was to clasp her in my arms and steal a kiss from her smiling lips. As I raised my head after this agreeable occupation, I saw a white face glaring in upon me through the open window. Alfred Briscoe, standing upon the verandah, had witnessed this little episode of love. The man's face was livid with passion as he glared upon me, and the very demon of murder flashed from his sunken eyes. The moment he found himself observed he slunk away like a baffled serpent that has coiled itself for a spring. But I did not fear the black looks of Alfred Briscoe. I was full of youth and strength, and knew that I could snap him to pieces like a pipe-stem. I did not let Edith know that we had been watched; I thought it would only needlessly annoy her, and perhaps alarm her fears for my safety, and I felt very confident of being able to take care of myself.

We were soon summoned to dinner. Alfred Briscoe was there, more amiable and agreeable than ever, full of light sayings, and witty to a degree. He appeared to be in the most exuberant spirits, but ever and anon his eyes rested upon me with an expression which seemed to say:

"Just you wait until I get a chance at you."

And I made up my mind that if I ever had occasion to hit him again, to put him in the doctor's hands for a lengthy period.

I started out for a long ramble after dinner, and walked quite a distance, lost my way, and got back to town about half-past eight in the evening. I had cut a small branch of a tree to serve as a walking-stick, and was quietly trudging along a path through the woods, which a countryman had told me would lead me out upon the road near Mr. Briscoe's house, when I heard, distinctly and sharply, the cry of "Murder."

I stopped appalled; my blood chilled, and the next

moment I bounded quickly forward. A dozen paces brought me into the road, where I saw a man down in the dust, and another bending over him, his arm raised, and the blade of a knife gleaming in the starlight. He sprang to his feet as he heard my steps, with the knife raised in a threatening manner. With one vigorous sweep of my cudgel I struck the knife from his hand, and he wheeled suddenly about, plunged into the bushes by the roadside, with the speed of light, and was out of sight in an instant. I thought it useless to attempt to follow him.

Stooping down to pick up the knife which I saw glistering in the road, my eye fell upon a smaller object, which I secured first. I just noticed that it was a ring, and thrust it into my vest-pocket. I next secured the knife, which to my utter amazement proved to be my own dirk—the one I had shown the ladies that very day. The blade was stained with blood. I wiped it upon an old letter I chanced to have in my pocket, and hastened to the assistance of the wounded man, who now moaned feebly, and gave other signs of retreating consciousness.

I raised him from the ground. He was a slight-built man, and by no means heavy. He was not so badly hurt, after all. He had ward off the assassin's blow with his right arm, which had an ugly gash upon it, and was bleeding profusely. The force of the blow had felled him to the ground, where his head had come in contact with a stone, that had stunned him for the moment, and left him powerless. A second blow would have been fatal. I had arrived just in time to save his life. I bound up his wound as well as I could with my pocket-handkerchief to stop the flow of blood, and asked him if he felt strong enough to walk to the centre of the town, where we could get a surgeon to dress his wound.

"My house is close by," he said, "and I would rather try to reach that, and then send for a surgeon."

It flashed upon me all at once.

"Is it possible that you are Mr. Thomas Briscoe?"

I cried, quickly.

"That is my name," he answered.

"Are your ten thousand pounds safe?" was my next interrogatory.

"Yes," he replied. "That money was the cause of this murderous assault, no doubt; but I can't imagine how it was known. I had so much money about me."

I explained to him how I knew it, and who I was. The suspicion I had entertained of the perpetrator of the crime was fast becoming a certainty. I was sure to detect him, as I had the test of his guilt in my pocket.

Despite Mr. Briscoe's remonstrances, I took him on my broad shoulders, as you have seen one boy carry another, and in this way we soon reached the house.

The ladies were filled with consternation at our appearance, and Alfred Briscoe was loud in his denunciation of the cowardly assassin; but I thought his face grew livid when he found that I had defeated the murderer's intent. He hastened off after a surgeon, and to put the police on the track of the assassin.

He had been very eager in his inquiries as to whether I should be able to recognise and identify the assassin. I told him I was afraid not, as the night was not clear, and as the man's face appeared to be muffled in crape. I had not been able to distinguish a feature, but I did not say anything about the ring I had in my pocket. While Alfred Briscoe was making these inquiries, I noticed that his right hand was bandaged, and I asked him what was the matter with it. He seemed very ill at ease as he replied that he had fallen that even, coming downstairs, and had sprained it.

After we had got Mr. Briscoe comfortably to bed, I left him to the care of his wife, and followed Edith into the parlour.

"Who could possibly have committed this deed?" she asked.

"Alfred Briscoe," I replied.

"His own brother?" she exclaimed, incredulously.

"You cannot mean it?"

"I most certainly do," I answered. "And here's the proof."

I took the ring from my pocket, a seal ring, with a blood-stone, engraved with the letters A. B.

"This ring I struck from the assassin's finger when I knocked the knife from his hand; and that knife was my own dirk."

I produced that also.

"See, Edith, the arch design of the villain. He stole the dirk from my room, and used it as the instrument of murder, in order to fasten the crime upon me; but by one of those special interpositions of providence I was the one ordained to frustrate his murderous intent, and having saved Mr. Thomas Briscoe's life, I cannot very well be charged with an at-

tempt to take it. The money Mr. Briscoe had upon his person was the main object of the deed, no doubt; but he thought it would be a capital chance to get me out of the way at the same time."

Edith was very much surprised at these revelations, and when I asked her opinion upon the subject, said, decidedly, that it was my duty to acquaint Mr. Thomas Briscoe with the truth. When he became convalescent from his wound, I did so. He was greatly shocked at this discovery of his brother's unnatural crime, but I could see that he was disposed to deal leniently with him.

"You are about to enter our family as Edith's husband—so my wife tells me," he said, "and our honour will be yours. We must not let the world know our family disgrace. Give me the ring—leave my brother to me, and forget all about it."

I did so. Edith and I have been married two years.

G. L. A.

THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XL.

They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The covert of revenge can feel: Byron.

THE first impulse of Giralda, as Lord Trevalyan so suddenly and opportunely made his appearance in the shrubbery, was to fly to his side and implore his protection. But the struggle with her emotion had left her weak, and she could only sit down and look at his lordship with a gaze made up of mingled dread, terror, and gratitude that he had saved her from her enemy.

The first impulse of Lord Adlowe also was not feeble. Conquering it, he faced his uncle with desolation and defiance.

"You here?" cried Lord Trevalyan, glowering at his nephew. "And clandestinely? What does this mean? Did you not receive the message I sent you by Rugby, forbidding you ever to set foot again in the house or grounds of Trevalyan Park while I live? Degenerate wretch! how dared you face this innocent young girl, after your recent outrage on her liberties? I would do well to chastise you for the base bound that you are!"

He lifted his heavy staff menacingly, and drew up his Herculean figure, and his black eyes flashed under his thick white brows, and every line of his rugged, grand old face expressed a stern and lofty contempt for his nephew.

"I received your message," answered Adlowe, sullenly. "I did not intend to intrude into your house, my lord," and his tone grew mocking. "I desired only an interview with your niece."

"And you chose to come upon her when she was alone and unprotected," sneered the old marquis. "Ah!" he added, a sudden thought striking him, "you were about to abduct her again. Her scream—her fright—I see it all now," and lightning leaped from his eyes. "It seems that I was just in time."

Adlowe shrank a little before the old lord's blazing wrath.

"For your other offence against my niece," continued Lord Trevalyan, in a voice of concentrated wrath, "I was willing that you should suffer no other punishment than banishment from my house, and the stings of your own conscience. The punishment for this last offence you shall remember while you live. Choose between a public prosecution or a horsewhipping from these premises, and choose quickly."

Lord Adlowe's face grew livid. A streak of sullen red raised itself on his cheeks, as if from the imprint of the threatened lash.

"Take care!" he cried warningly. "Take care! Before you threaten, old man, make sure that I was not here by appointment with your niece. Miss Arevalo," he said, turning to her, "you will not dare deny that you appointed to meet me at this hour in the shrubbery. You will not dare, I say—"

"But I do dare!" interrupted Giralda, springing up in a glow of royal indignation. "I deny that you were here by my appointment, Lord Adlowe. You came upon me unawares as I sat here alone. You offered me marriage, and when I again declined, you threatened to again carry me off. You advanced upon me for the purpose of capturing me, and it was then I screamed for aid."

Adlowe glared at the maiden in an awful fury, as if he longed to annihilate her.

Lord Trevalyan drew up his towering figure, flung back his haughty head, and advanced upon his nephew with uplifted staff.

feet in the rail, had been thrown from the line. The one in which I had been pretty well smashed up; the other, which had remained beside the track, and had not been thrown down the embankment, was not seriously damaged. Cries of alarm, amongst which I recognised female voices, proceeded from it. I hastened to the assistance of the inmates. I clambered up the steps and forced open the door, which had got wedged together somehow, and handed out the affrighted women and children. None appeared to have received any serious injury. The last lady that came gave a glad start of surprise as I assisted her out, and my astonishment was so great that I nearly dropped her. She was Edith Nones.

I could but think it a singular circumstance that she, who had occupied such a prominent place in my thoughts during the journey, should have been upon the train unknown to me.

"Why, Mr. McVeigh," she exclaimed, "is it you?" As I could not deny it, I did not attempt to. Indeed I never was at such a loss for words in my life.

"What in the world brings you here?" she continued, as I remained silent, trying to think what plausible motive I could invent for my journey.

I stammered out something about having a strong curiosity to visit the coal regions and inspect their wonders. She gave me an arch glance out of her soft, dove-like eyes, and I had a strong suspicion that she more than half suspected the truth. I blushed to my very temples, and attempted to turn the conversation by speaking of the frequency of railroad accidents at the time. She shuddered, and drew her veil over her face. The uninjured portion of the train had been backed down to the scene of the disaster, and the wounded were being conveyed to the nearest station, which, I heard a gentleman say, was a little over a mile ahead. We got in the train with the rest, and I took a seat beside her. The train moved slowly on again, and, as always happens, the uninjured soon forgot the peril through which they had passed.

"If you are merely sight-seeing among our hills," began Edith, when we were once more on our way, "I trust you will not refuse to make my sister's house your stopping-place while you remain. I need scarcely assure you that any friend of mine will be made welcome."

"If you count me among your friends already," I returned, gallantly, overjoyed at such an opportunity of being placed on so familiar a footing with my fair inmate, "I shall most certainly accept your kind invitation."

The rich blood glowed ruddily in her cheeks, and she turned away her head under pretence of looking out of the window; but she did not appear to be displeased, which I took as encouraging. I certainly was very far gone, and I could not help showing it.

"You will find my sister very amiable," she said, after a slight pause, resuming the conversation; "and Mr. Briscoe, her husband, is a most genial gentleman. It was a love-match between them, and though they have been married six years, they are more like a pair of lovers now than a married couple."

"Have they any children?" I asked, casually. "No; they have lost two—and that seems to draw them nearer to each other," responded Edith.

I soon discovered that she was devotedly attached to this sister, her senior by some five years, and was never tired of talking of her.

"Thomas Briscoe was quite a poor man when Hermine married him," Edith went on, with charming confidence, "and our friends thought it rather a poor match for her, thinking, with her money, she might have looked higher, and found some one better; but she had known him from a boy—he was her heart's choice, and as she was her own mistress no one could gainsay her. The marriage was the making of him, and he is not ashamed to own it. I have often heard him say he owed all to his wife. She gave him the money to buy a share in the mine, and he eventually became the sole owner, for he is a most energetic and prudent man, and has great business tact. They say now he is worth a hundred thousand pounds, and he has paid Hermine back what she advanced, and her property is all in her own name."

I conceived a great admiration for this Mr. Thomas Briscoe, and was anxious to make his acquaintance. I like these men who carve out their own fortunes. I intended to do something of the sort myself. Perhaps you may think I had not made a very promising commencement, but do not judge me too quickly; I merely wished to see just a little of the gay world before I settled down into a studious, sober man of business. Since I had met Edith I did not care how soon I settled down.

"Mr. Briscoe comes of a hard-working race, I presume?" I observed.

"Perhaps he does," returned Edith, "but he seems to be the only one of the race who has inherited the family virtue."

"How so?" I asked, in surprise. "Has he relatives?"

"One only, a brother—an elder brother—the pet of too indulgent parents. While Thomas was only thought fit to work in the mine, Alfred, who seemed to have a disinclination to work from his cradle, was brought up as a gentleman, and sent to college. His parents impoverished themselves to place him in a sphere higher than their own. Thomas was their sole support for years before they died, while Alfred never sent them a pound. Indeed, I know he has made heavy drains on Thomas's purse repeatedly."

"Does he live in Durham?" I asked, feeling quite interested in this family history.

"Oh, no; he lives in London. He is a stock-broker, or something of that sort. Always dresses well and lives in good style. He visits us quite often. He is very civil and agreeable. Hermine likes him, but I—I don't."

It appeared to me that Edith was about to qualify her dislike by some other term.

"Why don't you like him?" I asked, rather impertinently, I own, but her very frankness encouraged me.

"Oh! I can't say," she answered, indifferently. "Who can account for a woman's likes or dislikes? Old lawyer Butler said a strange thing to me one day: 'Tom thinks of taking his brother Alfred in as partner,' said he, 'and you just prevent it.' He would not explain, but I know he thinks Alfred is not over scrupulous. He thinks he ought to have a share in the money that has been made, though he never raised a finger to do it."

I began to think that Miss Edith Nones was a long-headed young lady, and not to be made a fool of. It rather damped my hopes when I reflected that, rich as I thought myself with my five thousand—minus about five hundred—she was worth five times as much as I was. I began to wish that her fortune might be spirited away in some mysterious manner so as not to be a bar between us. I was young then, as I have said—generous and romantic to a degree. I have since learned that money does not seriously interfere either with love or happiness.

In this desultory conversation the time passed pleasantly away, and we arrived at our journey's end without further accident. I went with Edith to the residence of Mr. Briscoe, an elegant mansion, delightfully situated on rising ground. Mrs. Briscoe received me very cordially, glancing with a peculiar smile at Edith as she introduced me. I must explain the cause at the risk of being thought vain; but, hang it! in these days of looking-glasses a man cannot help knowing how he looks. I was a pretty fair specimen of manhood, with my Scottish blood strongly marked in form and feature. My old grandmother—Mr. McGregor—always said I looked like a portrait of Sir William Wallace, which she had seen in her young days in Edinburgh, but she was rather partial, and I was her particular pet. I stood six feet in my stockings, and was pretty well developed, a little angular and awkward perhaps, with my long arms and longer legs, but that was to wear off with the greenness of youth. I was broad across, and possessed of great strength, more than the shambling appearance of my limbs betokened; but vigorous exercises in rowing, playing ball, and other out-door sports, had strengthened and developed my muscles. I had a ruddy complexion, curly light brown hair, and a mild blue eye that gave very little token of the spirit of mischief within. I was good-natured to a fault, but quick to resent an insult. In short, I was a gentle sort of a Tartar. There, having stood for my portrait, I will descend from the platform and go on with my story.

The glance that Mrs. Briscoe bestowed upon her sister said, as plainly as a glance could:

"Edith, you have brought your beau."

And as her eyes again wandered to my face, I rather thought she approved her sister's choice. This strengthened the good opinion that I had already formed of her—an opinion which I shall hold to the last. A more thoroughly good and womanly woman than Hermine Briscoe never breathed upon the earth. There was a great similarity between the sisters—Mrs. Briscoe looking more maternally, but scarcely any older—they had the same wealth of black hair, pale, regular features, and dark gray eyes. Both were of medium height, neither too tall nor too short.

Mr. Briscoe was not at home. He had gone to Liverpool to cash some heavy drafts, intending to make some important alterations in the mine, and wishing to place the money in the local bank so as to have it ready when wanted for use. It was quite a large sum—nearly ten thousand pounds. They spoke of it as a mere trifle, and I began to realise that though my five thousand was a large sum in my eyes, in other eyes it might appear quite insignificant.

We grew very sociable together, and I felt quite at home. Edith took me out for a walk through the town, which I thought quite a thriving place. The next day she promised to take me into the mine. We

had a delightful evening, devoted almost entirely to music. Both sisters were accomplished performers upon the piano, and had voices of much power, well cultivated. When I retired to the neat little chamber allotted to me, which was up one flight, and overlooked the river and the coal hills, I felt little inclination to sleep, but sat a long time by the window thinking of Edith. It appeared to me that heaven, in the very outset of my career, had thrown this gentle being in my way, to save me from an idle and dissolute life, and make a man of me. I went to bed at last, to toss about and dream of her by fits and starts, until morning.

I was up by daylight, and took a long ramble over the hills before breakfast. I am a great walker, and always take a good deal of pleasure in roving through sylvan scenery. We inspected the mine as agreed upon, descending into the bowels of the earth, where the grim miners glided about, with their little lamps fastened to their hats, looking like fireflies in the gloom. This used up the forenoon, and we returned to the house with a good appetite for dinner.

As we drew near we descried Mrs. Briscoe conversing with a gentleman upon the verandah.

"I do believe there's that odious Alfred Briscoe!" exclaimed Edith, vehemently.

"Why odious?" I asked, covertly.

She reddened a little as she turned away her eyes from mine.

"I may as well tell you," she returned, "for you will find it out soon enough now. He does me the honour to pay court to me, and wishes to marry me."

"The deuce he does!" I exclaimed, unguardedly.

She turned her eyes full upon me with an arch expression. It was my turn to colour then.

"Don't be alarmed," she said, demurely; "I don't intend to have him."

I felt immeasurably relieved at this declaration, and my face showed it, and she smiled again. I have often thought since what a strange pair of lovers we were. We did all our courting with the eyes, and seemed to have tacitly accepted each other at the first glance. I looked curiously at Mr. Alfred Briscoe as we drew near, but his back was towards us, and I could not see his face. Mrs. Briscoe, who saw us, evidently told him we were coming, for he turned quickly around.

"Thunder!" I exclaimed, involuntarily, and stopping short.

"What's the matter?" cried Edith, turning to me, and very much astonished at this singular epithet, which was about as near as a man could come to swearing in a lady's presence.

"I stepped upon a stone, and I do believe I have sprained my ankle," I answered, as I stooped down, and pretended to examine the injured member, "No, it's all right—only gave it a twist."

I tried my best to collect myself and appear calm, but my brain was all in a whirl, and I was so astonished that I hardly knew what I was about. The recognition had been mutual, as his eyes met mine. It would have been hard to say which was the most astonished man of the two. This gentleman conversing with Mrs. Briscoe was Parks, the sharper I had knocked down in the supper-rooms in London. It was not a pleasant meeting upon either side. He certainly never expected to meet me there, and I as certainly never expected to meet him. And this was Alfred Briscoe. The initials A. B. upon the stone of his ring were no longer a mystery.

I never felt more awkward in my life, but I knew my best plan was to meet the affair boldly, and treat him as an entire stranger. If he chose to bring up the matter, it would be more to his discredit than mine. By the time we reached the verandah I had become quite cool and collected. There was not the slightest apparent sign of recognition, unless it was perhaps just a quiver of the eyelids as we were presented to each other. No one would have imagined for a moment that we had ever met before. I could not help thinking what a consummate pair of hypocrites we both were. There was one thing, however, I prided myself upon: experienced man of the world as he was, I, a stripling, a mere tyro in life's mysteries, was his equal in coolness and self-possession.

Treating me with the most marked consideration and respect outwardly, he took every occasion, covertly, to make me appear in a ridiculous light before the ladies, flinging little quiet sarcasms at me in a way that could not be resented without making me appear unreasonably hot-headed and sensitive. I rather enjoyed this keen encounter of our wits, for I gave him as good as he sent, as it proved he was annoyed at Edith's evident liking for my society. The ladies had no suspicion of the ill-feeling existing between us. Edith looked a little surprised at some of his sneers, and seemed disposed to resent them. She more than suspected this man's true character, and respect for her sister's feelings alone made her treat him with common politeness. He could not influence her against me—that was one comfort.

Mrs. Briscoe received a telegram from her husband, stating that he would be home by the evening train.

"He will be here by nine o'clock to-night," she said. "He always walks from the station."

I remarked that I thought it a risk to run, he having so much money about him, her house being on the outskirts of the town, and some portions of the way quite lonely. I had observed that in my walks about the place.

"Oh, there is no danger," she answered, lightly.

"Is he armed?" I asked.

"He never carried a weapon in his life," she returned. "Do you?"

"Not exactly," I made answer. "I have one—though I do not carry it about me—an heirloom in our family, a relic of the olden time—a Scottish dirk that belonged to a namesake of mine, Malcolm McVeigh, a corporal in the celebrated Highland Regiment, known as the 'Black Watch,' that was so distinguished at the battle of Dettingen. I have it upstairs in my carpet-bag."

The ladies expressed a desire to see it, and I went for the dirk, and brought it down for their examination. Alfred Briscoe was present when this conversation took place, and he examined the dirk critically. After their curiosity was satisfied, I carried it back to my chamber.

I stopped awhile to make some change in my apparel, intending to take a long walk after dinner. Returning downstairs, I found Edith alone in the parlour, looking, I thought, out of sorts, as if something had ruffled the natural serenity of her temper.

"What's the matter?" I asked, taking a place beside her on the sofa.

"I've settled it," she cried, petulantly. "I've settled it for good and all!"

"Have you? Well, I am glad to hear that; but what have you settled?"

She smiled, and her good humour came back again.

"Mr. Alfred Briscoe proposed to me ten minutes ago, and I rejected him."

"And he vows vengeance, I presume?"

"Oh, no—he would never dare to threaten me. Covertly, he would work me mischief if he could. It is a great disappointment to him, I know, as he is very anxious to have the spending of my money."

"Edith, I wish you did not have any money," I cried, suddenly.

"Why?" she demanded, in surprise.

"Because I don't wish to be accused of mercenary motives—don't you see?"

"But why should you be?"

"Well—I have been thinking—for some little time—that—I—should like to marry you myself."

"Well, Malcolm?"

"But the confounded money makes it look as if it wasn't love that swayed me, entirely and purely."

"I think we can get over that difficulty," she said, quietly. "After we are married I will give it away."

"To whom?" I asked.

"To you, dear," she said, with a most provoking smile.

My only reply was to clasp her in my arms and steal a kiss from her smiling lips. As I raised my head after this agreeable occupation, I saw a white face glaring in upon me through the open window. Alfred Briscoe, standing upon the verandah, had witnessed this little episode of love. The man's face was livid with passion as he glared upon me, and the very demon of murder flashed from his sunken eyes. The moment he found himself observed he slunk away like a baffled serpent that has coiled itself for a spring. But I did not fear the black looks of Alfred Briscoe. I was full of youth and strength, and knew that I could snap him to pieces like a pipe-stem. I did not let Edith know that we had been watched; I thought it would only needlessly annoy her, and perhaps alarm her fears for my safety, and I felt very confident of being able to take care of myself.

We were soon summoned to dinner. Alfred Briscoe was there, more amiable and agreeable than ever, full of light sayings, and witty to a degree. He appeared to be in the most exuberant spirits, but ever and anon his eyes rested upon me with an expression which seemed to say:

"Just you wait until I get a chance at you."

And I made up my mind that if I ever had occasion to hit him again, to put him in the doctor's hands for a lengthy period.

I started out for a long ramble after dinner, and walked quite a distance, lost my way, and got back to town about half-past eight in the evening. I had cut a small branch of a tree to serve as a walking-stick, and was quietly trudging along a path through the woods, when a countryman had told me would lead me out upon the road near Mr. Briscoe's house, when I heard, distinctly and sharply, the cry of "Murder."

I stopped appalled; my blood chilled, and the next

moment I bounded quickly forward. A dozen paces brought me into the road, where I saw a man down in the dust, and another bending over him, his arm raised, and the blade of a knife gleaming in the starlight. He sprang to his feet as he heard my steps, with the knife raised in a threatening manner. With one vigorous sweep of my cudgel I struck the knife from his hand, and he wheeled suddenly about, plunged into the bushes by the roadside, with the speed of light, and was out of sight in an instant. I thought it useless to attempt to follow him.

Stooping down to pick up the knife which I saw glistening in the road, my eye fell upon a smaller object, which I secured first. I just noticed that it was a ring, and thrust it into my vest-pocket. I next secured the knife, which to my utter amazement proved to be my own dirk—the one I had shown the ladies that very day. The blade was stained with blood. I wiped it upon an old letter I chanced to have in my pocket, and hastened to the assistance of the wounded man, who now moaned feebly, and gave other signs of returning consciousness.

I raised him from the ground. He was a slight-built man, and by no means heavy. He was not so badly hurt, after all. He had ward off the assassin's blow with his right arm, which had an ugly gash upon it, and was bleeding profusely. The force of the blow had felled him to the ground, where his head had come in contact with a stone, that had stunned him for the moment, and left him powerless. A second blow would have been fatal. I had arrived just in time to save his life. I bound up his wound as well as I could with my pocket-handkerchief to stop the flow of blood, and asked him if he felt strong enough to walk to the centre of the town, where we could get a surgeon to dress his wound.

"My house is close by," he said, "and I would rather try to reach that, and then send for a surgeon." It flashed upon me all at once.

"Is it possible that you are Mr. Thomas Briscoe?" I cried, quickly.

"That is my name," he answered.

"Are your ten thousand pounds safe?" was my next interrogatory.

"Yes," he replied. "That money was the cause of this murderous assault, no doubt; but I can't imagine how it was known. I had so much money about me."

I explained to him how I knew it, and who I was. The suspicion I had entertained of the perpetrator of the crime was fast becoming a certainty. I was sure to detect him, as I had the test of his guilt in my pocket.

Despite Mr. Briscoe's remonstrances, I took him on my broad shoulders, as you have seen one boy carry another, and in this way we soon reached the house.

The ladies were filled with consternation at our appearance, and Alfred Briscoe was loud in his denunciation of the cowardly assassin; but I thought his face grew livid when he found that I had defeated the murderer's intent. He hastened off after a surgeon, and to put the police on the track of the assassin.

He had been very eager in his inquiries as to whether I should be able to recognise and identify the assassin. I told him I was afraid not, as the night was not clear, and as the man's face appeared to be muffled in crape. I had not been able to distinguish a feature, but I did not say anything about the ring I had in my pocket. While Alfred Briscoe was making these inquiries, I noticed that his right hand was bandaged, and I asked him what was the matter with it. He seemed very ill at ease as he replied that he had fallen that even, coming downstairs, and had sprained it.

After we had got Mr. Briscoe comfortably to bed, I left him to the care of his wife, and followed Edith into the parlour.

"Who could possibly have committed this deed?" she asked.

"Alfred Briscoe," I replied.

"His own brother!" she exclaimed, incredulously. "You cannot mean it?"

"I most certainly do," I answered. "And here's the proof."

I took the ring from my pocket, a seal ring, with a blood-stone, engraved with the letters A. B.

"This ring I struck from the assassin's finger when I knocked the knife from his hand; and that knife was my own dirk."

I produced that also.

"See, Edith, the arch design of the villain. He stole the dirk from my room, and used it as the instrument of murder, in order to fasten the crime upon me; but by one of those special interpositions of providence I was the one ordained to frustrate his murderous intent, and having saved Mr. Thomas Briscoe's life, I cannot very well be charged with an at-

tempt to take it. The money Mr. Briscoe had upon his person was the main object of the deed, no doubt; but he thought it would be a capital chance to get me out of the way at the same time."

Edith was very much surprised at these revelations, and when I asked her opinion upon the subject, said, decidedly, that it was my duty to acquaint Mr. Thomas Briscoe with the truth. When he became convalescent from his wound, I did so. He was greatly shocked at this discovery of his brother's unnatural crime, but I could see that he was disposed to deal leniently with him.

"You are about to enter our family as Edith's husband—so my wife tells me," he said, "and our honour will be yours. We must not let the world know our family disgrace. Give me the ring—leave my brother to me, and forget all about it."

I did so. Edith and I have been married two years.

G. L. A.

THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XL.

They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal seal
The convert of revenge can feel.

Byron.

The first impulse of Gerald, as Lord Trevelyan so suddenly and opportunely made his appearance in the shrubbery, was to fly to his side and implore his protection. But the struggle with her emotion had left her weak, and she could only sit down and look at his lordship with a gaze made up of mingled dread, terror, and gratitude that he had saved her from her enemy.

The first impulse of Lord Adlowe also was to flee. Conquering it, he faced his uncle with desperation and defiance.

"You here?" cried Lord Trevelyan, glowering at his nephew. "And clandestinely? What does this mean? Did you not receive the message I sent you by Rigby, forbidding you ever to set foot again in the house or grounds of Trevelyan Park while I live? Degenerate wretch! how dared you face this innocent young girl, after your recent outrage on her liberties? I would do well to chastise you for the base bound that you are!"

He lifted his heavy staff menacingly, and drew up his Herculean figure, and his black eyes flashed under his thick white brows, and every line of his rugged, grand old face expressed a stern and lofty contempt for his nephew.

"I received your message," answered Adlowe, sullenly. "I did not intend to intrude into your house, my lord," and his tone grew mocking. "I desired only an interview with your niece."

"And you chose to come upon her when she was alone and unprotected," sneered the old marquis. "Ah!" he added, a sudden thought striking him, "you were about to abduct her again. Her scream—her fright—I see it all now, and lightning leaped from his eyes. "It seems that I was just in time."

Adlowe shrank a little before the old lord's blazing wrath.

"For your other offence against my niece," continued Lord Trevelyan, in a voice of concentrated wrath, "I was willing that you should suffer no other punishment than banishment from my house, and the stings of your own conscience. The punishment for this last offence you shall remember while you live. Choose between a public prosecution or a horsewhipping from these premises, and choose quickly."

Lord Adlowe's face grew livid. A streak of sullen red raised itself on his cheeks, as if from the imprint of the threatened lash.

"Take care!" he cried warningly. "Take care! Before you threaten, old man, make sure that I was not here by appointment with your niece. Miss Arevalo," he said, turning to her, "you will not dare deny that you appointed to meet me at this hour in the shrubbery. You will not dare, I say—"

"But I do dare!" interrupted Gerald, springing up in a glow of royal indignation. "I deny that you were here by my appointment, Lord Adlowe. You came upon me unawares as I sat here alone. You offered me marriage, and, when I again declined, you threatened to again carry me off. You advanced upon me for the purpose of capturing me, and it was then I screamed for aid."

Adlowe glared at the maiden in an awful fury, as if he longed to annihilate her.

Lord Trevelyan drew up his towering figure, flung back his haughty head, and advanced upon his nephew with uplifted staff.

"Hold!" cried Adlowe, waving him back, and speaking hissing. "Uncle, I have something to say to you—a confession to make."

The marquise half halted, impressed by the ungovernable rage of his nephew.

"She has brought it on herself," continued Adlowe, pointing at Giralda, and flinging all caution or consideration to the winds. "I offered to keep her secret, but she would not have my friendship. You shall know all, my lord—the secret of this young beauty, the secret of her—"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Giralda, convulsed with terror. "Oh, my lord! my lord! have mercy!"

Adlowe's lips wreathed themselves in a sardonic smile. He leaned towards the young girl, a growing light in his sinister eyes.

"I give you a chance to save yourself and them," he whispered—"a last chance. Will you be my wife?"

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Giralda, shudderingly, white with anguish. "I cannot, my lord, I cannot."

The marquise looked from one to the other, bewildered and mystified.

"What does this mean?" he demanded, distrustfully and impatiently.

"It means, my lord," responded Adlowe, deliberately, his burning eyes fixed on the shrinking figure of the tortured girl—"it means—shall I tell him, Giralda?" he said, in a quick whisper. "Will you still refuse to save your father?"

The maiden with difficulty repressed the shriek that arose to her lips. It was a horrible position for her, with her tender, sensitive heart, full of a daughter's fondest love. She struggled with herself. She was tempted to yield to Adlowe's monstrous demand.

But not even now in this awful peril could she be untrue to the principles of her lifetime, to the instincts of her soul. Her love for her parents, for Lord Grosvenor, for the right, forbade her yielding. With a moan of utter anguish she shook her head, and said in a hushed whisper:

"I cannot save them! I cannot marry you, Lord Adlowe!"

The anger of the profligate lord deepened to temporary madness.

"What is all this mystery?" demanded Lord Trevalyan. "What are you saying to Giralda, Adlowe?"

"I will explain all, my lord," said Adlowe, not stirring his scorching face from that of his intended victim. "I have made a discovery. It is that your assassin nephew, your intended robber and murderer, the infamous Geoffrey Trevalyan, still lives."

Giralda uttered a low wild wail.

The marquise staggered as if he had received a mortal wound, and leaned heavily against a tree, staring wildly at Adlowe.

"Geoffrey alive!" he muttered incredulously.

"It is not too late, Giralda," muttered Adlowe, under his breath. "Speak!"

Giralda slowly shook her head.

"You said he was alive—that Geoffrey was alive?" asked the marquise, unheeding this by-play.

"Alive, and in England!" cried Adlowe, shrilly, raising his voice. "That letter from Brazil, announcing his death, was a forgery. He played a clever game against us, that's all. He came back to England, and has been in hiding here since, under an assumed name, waiting for you, my lord, to die, that he may come forward and inherit the title and estates."

"Alive, and in England!" repeated the marquise, in a dazed way. "So near me all these years, when I thought him dead! Alive!"

"Yes, alive!" reiterated Adlowe, savagely. "And lying off in his secret web, like a spider waiting for prey—waiting for your death."

All the fierce and revengeful passions of the old lord's soul were stirred like a nest of serpents by Adlowe's words and tones.

"Where is he?" he cried, looking around him, as if he expected to behold his hated nephew advance from the close-settling shadows. "Is he here?"

"Oh, no!" cried Adlowe, with a cruel laugh. "He is living near London. I have just been to see him at his luxurious home. I can tell you, my lord, that he is no miser in his living. He knew me at once. And I knew him, despite his clever disguise. He spoke of you, and jeered at you, just as he used to do. He offered me a handsome sum to tell him the exact state of your health, and just how long you are likely to live—"

The marquise threw up his arms with a cry of anguish. He doubted none of Adlowe's assertions, for the profligate's manner in assuring him that

Geoffrey lived was full of an unmistakable sincerity.

"Geoffrey is secretly married, and has a family!" pursued Lord Adlowe, not averting his gaze from the young girl. "So that even if you succeeded in sending him to a penal colony to expiate his crime, you could not deprive his offspring of their inheritance, nor prevent his knowing of their grandeur. You see how cleverly he has outwitted us. But he has guarded against being taken, I doubt not. He had a pretty scheme—a very pretty scheme, my lord, against you, which remains to be unfolded."

"What was it?" asked the marquise, in a broken voice.

"He has a daughter, beautiful, accomplished, and winning. With her aid, he resolved to outwit and mock you."

Giralda interrupted her enemy by a pitiful cry.

"It is still not too late, Giralda," whispered Lord Adlowe, with a most feverish eagerness. "Promise me what I ask, and I will save your father. Promise, and I will save you from my uncle's scorn and hatred."

"I cannot promise," answered Giralda, suddenly. "But as you will pray for mercy one day at the hands of Heaven, have mercy on me now!"

Her looks, her words, her attitude, so utterly despairing, all declared her resolution to be unalterable.

With a fierce gesture, Adlowe turned from her, hatred seething in his heart, inspiring him with an unwonted recklessness.

"As I was saying, my lord," he resumed, "Geoffrey has a beautiful daughter, as artful as a siren, as innocent in looks as a dove. Geoffrey has gone on from bad to worse since you cast him off, and he informed himself of your miserly habits, and of the probable amount of your savings, and formed the project of sending this girl of his to your house. He hoped and expected that she would wind herself into your heart, and win for herself the savings of your years of penuriousness. He thought that this girl would procure for you his pardon, and his reinstatement with his family at the Park."

"Let him send his daughter!" ejaculated the marquise, with brows as black as a thunder-cloud. "Let him try his pretty scheme!"

Adlowe looked again at Giralda. She was looking at him with a world of beseeching in her eyes, but there was no sign of yielding in her countenance or manner. He saw that she would die rather than marry him. He saw that not even to save her idolized father would she perjure her soul.

He pursued his false narration remorselessly.

"At a moment opportune for Geoffrey's schemes, my lord," he said, "you advertised for a nurse, and Geoffrey sent his daughter, trusting to her woman's cunning to procure the situation. He had trained her most carefully. She came to the Park; she told a pitiful story—the story she had learned by heart—"

"Oh, my lord, it's false!" interposed Giralda, her face white with a death-like pallor, her eyes like frightened stars. "Oh, uncle, believe me, he speaks falsely!"

She ran before the marquise, clasping her hands in anguished pleading. She would have knelt at his feet, but that he put out one shaking hand and gently restrained her.

"What do you know about it, Giralda?" he said, still not comprehending, still bewildered. "No one shall harm you!"

"How Geoffrey Trevalyan would laugh in his soul after that assurance," said Adlowe, with a demon's sneer. "How well your lordship has been entrapped by your assassin nephew! How completely you have fallen a victim to the wiles of his siren daughter! You have made a will bequeathing her a fortune. You have taken her into your heart. You have made her mistress of your house—"

"Who?"

"Geoffrey Trevalyan's daughter! That siren-faced girl at your feet, Giralda Trevalyan!"

The marquise turned his gaze fully upon the now kneeling girl. Her white face gleamed through the twilight like the face of a dead woman. Her eyes, wild and anguished, shone on him in their full splendour—those eyes so like those of Geoffrey Trevalyan.

The truth of her identity rushed upon his soul in a quick flood!

He saw not her sweet, innocent face, her looks of frightened pleading, her utter terror—he saw only that she had under her fair brows eyes fatally like those of a man he cruelly hated.

"Ah, I have been duped!" he hissed between his closed teeth. "It is the second time! And I believed her as innocent as an angel! She wormed herself into my heart as Geoffrey did, to sting me more cruelly. Oh heaven!" and his voice burst out in a great flood of anguish, and he looked wildly upwards. "Surely heaven must pity one so wronged and deceived as I!"

"Uncle! uncle!" said Giralda, clinging to his knees in wild despair, "papa is innocent. Oh, forgive him! He did not send me here. I did not know until we went to London that papa was Geoffrey Trevalyan—that I was really your niece by blood. Oh, take papa back to your love again! He never harmed you—never!"

"She acknowledges it!" said the marquise, hollowly, continuing to gaze upwards. "She owns that she is the daughter of Geoffrey Trevalyan. Until now I had hoped!"

"My lord!" said Adlowe, bitterly, "I came here from abroad, not knowing that Geoffrey lived. That girl's eyes aroused my suspicions. I hired a detective and tracked out my unworthy cousin Geoffrey. I learned the whole story of his base plotting. I beheld myself threatened with poverty, after years of expected wealth. In my despair, I resolved to meet Geoffrey's plots with counterplots. I resolved to marry his daughter, and thus secure myself against a penniless future. I proposed marriage to her, and she refused me. I carried her off, and she escaped. I came here to-night to carry her off again, if she should again refuse me. I am a reckless, desperate man, my lord. I have been outwitted in every way, defeated in all my dearest schemes, and now my infamous cousin steps in between me and my expected inheritance."

In the depths of his own despair, Lord Trevalyan thought less harshly of the wrong-doing of his nephew.

"Say no more, Lord Adlowe," he said, huskily. "We will join hands in pursuit of Geoffrey. The sum I intended for this girl shall be yours. We will be revenged upon Geoffrey, and punish him as he deserves. We will crush his family. You and I will work together. He shall see that he has mocked at me too soon."

Overcome with joy, Adlowe stretched out his hand. The marquise did not take it, nor heed the gesture.

"Uncle! oh, uncle!" moaned Giralda, clasping his knees, "papa is innocent. He loves you, uncle. Be merciful to him, to mamma, to my poor brothers!"

"Hush!" said his lordship, harshly, turning away his head, for he dared not look upon the sweet face he still so dearly loved, and he dared not listen to her tremulous voice, which yet had power to stir his soul to its lowest depths. "I loved you and you deceived me. I might have known that you would have been base and scheming, for you had his eyes! Out of my sight, girl! I cannot bear to look upon your face. Away! Leave my house! Let me never look into your treacherous eyes again!"

He broke from her roughly. Giralda tottered to her feet and stood facing him, compelling him, by her steadfast gaze, to look at her. He could just see that her cheeks glowed, and that her eyes shone like brilliant stars under her clustering rings of hair, and that she bore herself like an insulted princess.

"Lord Trevalyan," she said, in a tone that enforced his attention, "you have cruelly wronged papa! You have cruelly wronged me! In sending me away, you send from you the heart that loves you best in all the world! Despite your harshness and cruel prejudices and revengefulness, I love you now, uncle. If you should ever need me I will come to you. This man," and she indicated Lord Adlowe, "has been your evil genius! It was he who concocted that plan to ruin poor papa! It is he who has persecuted me from the hour he beheld me under your roof. Some day, my lord, you will know the truth. Some day justice must triumph and wickedness be punished! When I can prove papa's innocence, and Lord Adlowe's guilt, we shall meet again! Till then, farewell!"

She turned away, gliding like a spirit into the shadows. Lord Trevalyan aroused himself from the brief trance into which he had fallen, and his love for Giralda asserted itself, and, forgetting all the charges of Adlowe, forgetting his hatred of Geoffrey Trevalyan—remembering only that mighty love—he stretched out his arms and cried, in the anguish of his storm-tossed soul:

"Oh, Giralda! my darling! come back! come back!"

CHAPTER XLI.

This accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes,
And wrangle with my reason, that persuades me
To any other truth. *Shakespeare.*

LORD TREVALYAN'S distressful cry did not reach the ears for which it was intended. Half wild with excitement, Giralda had plunged into the shrubbery, not knowing nor caring whither she went. To get away from the Park, and the mocking face and voice of her enemy, was the one idea that possessed her.

She had, however, not progressed far in her wild flight through those reckless shades, when a woman's figure darted out into her very pathway, and a woman's hand caught her by the arm, bringing her to an abrupt halt.

The figure and the hand belonged to Mrs. Plumpton, the housekeeper at the Park.

Giralda looked at her in a bewildered way, recognising her, and strove to break from her detaining grasp.

"Let me go! Let me go!" she panted, trembling like a deer brought to bay. "He told me to begone!"

"I know it!" cried Mrs. Plumpton, all excitement and tears. "I heard it all, Miss Giralda! I was looking for you, knowing that you had gone to walk in the shrubbery alone. I came upon you at the glade at the moment my lord did. How his lordship raged! And Mr. Geoffrey's alive! Thank God, my prayers are answered!"

The good woman sobbed in very excess of joy.

"And you are Mr. Geoffrey's daughter!" she continued, clinging to Giralda's hand. "I might have known it by your bonny eyes! I wonder I never suspected it! How blind I have been! Don't tremble so, my poor lamb. You've got a friend in me!"

The housekeeper's tone of hearty kindness soothed Giralda's nerves, and she fell upon the good soul's ample bosom, and wept convulsively.

"It is so hard to bear!" she sobbed. "Papa is safe, and they cannot harm him, but Lord Trevalyan will never be assured of papa's innocence! Oh, Mrs. Plumpton, I have hoped for so much, and now—"

"There! there!" said the worthy housekeeper, soothing the maiden as if she had been a child. "It will be all right some day, Miss Giralda. Don't go to crying yourself sick, my poor lamb. Think of Mr. Geoffrey, and the rest of them. Don't lose your courage now at this late day!"

Thus adjured, Giralda began to grow calmer.

"You must come into the house, Miss Giralda," said Mrs. Plumpton, who was brimming over with joyful importance at the prospect of aiding even indirectly her beloved Mr. Geoffrey. "You won't see anybody," she protested, as the girl began to object. "You shall go into my quiet little room, and we'll talk up about your going away there at our leisure!"

Giralda yielded to the woman's persuasion, and the two, hand in hand, threaded the dark shrubbery, crossed the shaded lawn, and gained the housekeeper's room, in the rear wing of the mansion, without being seen.

The glazed door of Mrs. Plumpton's room stood invitingly open, but there was no light save the faint glow emitted by the few embers in the grate. The housekeeper stirred the fire, closed the doors and shutters, and lighted a lamp.

"Sit down here, Miss Giralda," she said, drawing forward a red-covered easy-chair. "I've locked the door, and no one can intrude upon us. How pale you are, poor lamb!"

She sat down at a respectful distance, while Giralda leaned back in her chair, her weary soul refreshed and strengthened by the good woman's tender kindness and sympathy.

"You mustn't take my lord's words to heart," said the housekeeper. "As long as your papa's safe you needn't care what my lord says or does. He's no better than a raging tiger when he's aroused. Lord Adlowe is very cunning, and knows just how to stir him up. I wonder, miss, that, being the daughter of poor Mr. Geoffrey, you dared come to the Park at all."

"When I came here, I came only in answer to Lord Trevalyan's advertisement," explained Giralda, wearily. "I did not know that papa was his nephew, or that papa had ever been called Geoffrey Trevalyan. I knew nothing of this terrible secret. When his lordship took me up to London, I saw mamma, and she told me all. And then it was I dedicated myself to the task of clearing my father's name."

"And quite right too, Miss Giralda," said Mrs.

Plumpton, wiping her eyes. "But there's no use trying to soften my lord's heart against poor Mr. Geoffrey. I little knew what interest you had in it when I begged you to speak a good word for my poor wronged young master. And he's alive, as I suspected. I wonder if he remembers me."

"You may be sure, dear Mrs. Plumpton, that he remembers all his old friends."

"That I may. He had the truest, kindest heart. He was the noblest fellow that ever lived—so true, so gay, so honest. He was like the apple of my eye, Miss Giralda. Now I know why I loved you so much from the first."

"I must go away from here at once, this very night," said Giralda, drearily. "Where can I go, Mrs. Plumpton? Papa has left home and found a safe refuge elsewhere. Our home is broken up, I think."

"Of course you'll go right to your mother," suggested the housekeeper.

Giralda's cheeks flushed painfully.

"I cannot," she said, in a smothered voice. "There are reasons, Mrs. Plumpton, which you will know one day, why I can't go to mamma. My dear, dear mother!" and her tones trembled.

"I understand," said the housekeeper. "She's an actress—you told me once—and don't want you with her. Quite right. A theatre is no place for a young girl like you. I can't understand, though," she added, "how Mr. Geoffrey came to marry a play-actor, begging your pardon, miss. Has your mamma no relations?"

"None to whom I can go."

"And you have no other friends to go to?"

"None but Lord Grosvenor," replied Giralda, blushing. "He is my promised husband, Mrs. Plumpton. I will go to him. I can easily walk to the Eyrie, and he will tell me what to do."

"Not for worlds!" cried Mrs. Plumpton, in alarm. "It's out of the question for you to go to the Eagle's Eyrie. Mr. Geoffrey's daughter must not compromise her name by such an unguarded step; and people would talk if you sought refuge there. No one must say anything ill against the daughter of the future Marquis Trevalyan. Leave the matter to me, Miss Giralda. I will try and think of a refuge for you."

The good woman became thoughtful. She had a morbid fear of the old marquis, but her love for her former nursing, Geoffrey Trevalyan, outweighed that fear. There was nothing she would not do, no sacrifice she would not make, for Geoffrey Trevalyan or his child.

"You cannot stay in the village alone, that's certain," she murmured. "You would be at Lord Adlowe's mercy there. You cannot go to the Eyrie. You cannot stay here. What you want is a quiet, secluded place, where no one can find or harm you, and where you can stay until you can write and get letters from your parents."

"Yes; that is what I want," said Giralda, eagerly.

"The more secluded the place, the safer I shall feel." "Towns and villages won't do," mused Mrs. Plumpton. "A young girl alone in a country town excites gossip. Ah! I have it."

Her face brightened up, and she drew nearer to Giralda in sudden excitement.

"I know the very place for you, Miss Giralda," she exclaimed. "There was a farmer's daughter who lived at the Park many years ago—a plain-faced, honest, homely creature that everybody liked. She left, on falling heirless to a farm of her uncle's—a queer old place on the Burnt Downs. Did you ever hear of it?"

Giralda replied in the negative.

"The Burnt Downs is a desolate district, covered with gorse that is annually burnt over, from some cause or other," explained Mrs. Plumpton. "It is about a mile in breadth, and some three miles in length. The only house on it is Peggy Willsey's, the woman I was speaking of. Lord Adlowe would never trace you there."

"Is it far from here?" asked Giralda.

"Over thirty miles. It's over twenty miles north-east of Hampton, the seat of the great Earl of Hampton—"

"I will go there," said Giralda, hastily, decided by the mention of the nearness of her mother's country home. "Do you think the woman will receive me?"

"I know she will. She is always kind to those in trouble, though many think her a hard, cold-hearted woman. She had a disappointment once, and that changed her. She was engaged to David Negwyn, the valet of Lord Adlowe and Mr. Geoffrey, at the very time that the great trouble happened."

"Negwyn? David Negwyn?" repeated Giralda, in astonishment, remembering the name. "I have heard of him, Mrs. Plumpton. If I could only find him!"

"Peggy'll know where he is, if anyone knows," observed the housekeeper, not noticing the emotion of her young guest.

"Then let us set out at once," cried Giralda, feverishly eager. "It is this Negwyn who alone can prove papa's innocence. Mamma has advertised and offered rewards for his address, but she could never discover him. Oh, Mrs. Plumpton, providence is surely guiding me through all these dark paths."

"We will start as soon as you have had your tea, Miss Giralda," said the housekeeper, arising. "Just lie back in the chair and rest, while I prepare your supper."

She went to a wall closet and brought out a clean cloth, which she spread on the small round table, and she then set out upon it a pot of jam, a goodly pot of butter, a seed cake, a portion of roasted fowl, and finally, a plate of cold muffins and a small copper tea-kettle.

By the time the tea was made the muffins were fully prepared, and Mrs. Plumpton wheeled Giralda's chair to the table, and proceeded to wait upon her.

"Sit down, Mrs. Plumpton," said Giralda, for the first time noticing that but one plate was laid. "I will not eat alone."

With some difficulty she persuaded the good woman to sit down with her and share the repast.

"How are we to perform the journey?" asked Giralda, as the meal progressed. "On foot?"

"No, miss; on horseback. My lord gave you a horse, and you must use it. There's a horse in the stable I always ride over to the village, for I can't abide this road in a waggon. I can bring the horses back when I come."

"But," said Giralda, "I fear you will get yourself into trouble by befriending me, dear friend. My uncle may discharge you on your return—"

"Let him," said the housekeeper, setting her lips together firmly. "He can't live without me, miss. Why, the house would be all at sixes and sevens in no time. He'd scare away all the servants with his temper if it wasn't for me. His lordship discharge me!" and she laughed good-humouredly at the preposterous idea. "He wouldn't try it."

Supper was eaten, and Mrs. Plumpton then suggested a change from Giralda's bright dress to something of sober hue.

"I'll slip up to your room, miss," she said, "and bring down what you are likely to want. Lock the door during my absence."

She hastened away immediately, and soon returned, fully dressed for her journey, and with her arms laden with Giralda's effects.

"Here's your travelling-bag, miss, with a change of under-garments, and your pocket-book in it," she explained. "Here is your black silk suit to wear, and your hat, in the place of that thing you had on in the shrubbery."

"Did you see my uncle, or Lord Adlowe?" asked Giralda, hastening to dress.

"No, miss. They are out scouring the road for you, so Sarah the house-maid says. We can't get away too soon. What my lord can want of you, after the way he spoke to you, I can't see. Maybe he wants to urge you to marry Lord Adlowe."

"Won't they see us on the road?" asked Giralda, in a tremor.

"We won't go the road," was the reply. "We'll try the bridle-path down the other side of the hill. Trust in me, miss, and keep up your courage."

Giralda was quickly ready. Mrs. Plumpton packed up a luncheon, which included a bottle of wine, and then covered her fire and extinguished the light. The glazed door was then unlocked, and the two, with beating hearts, stole out on the lawn.

The shadows still lay thickly over the outdoor scene, not a star being visible. The fugitives crept towards the stables in silence.

"There's no one out here now," whispered the housekeeper, as they entered the stable yard. "The men have gone in to their supper."

The stable-door was open. A big lantern, hung on the wall, lighted the interior of the stable, and the women, peering in, saw the horses in their stalls. "Stay here, miss, while I saddle the horses," said Mrs. Plumpton. "I often used to saddle mine in the old days when we kept but one man. You can warn me if you hear any one coming."

She saddled first Giralda's mare, and then a stout brown mountain pony for her own use, and led the two animals out to the horse-block in the stable yard.

Giralda mounted. The housekeeper followed her example, and the two rode silently out of the yard, crossed the rear end of the lawn, and rode into the shadow of a tall coppice which screened the stables from the mansion.

"You want a firm seat and a steady hand now, Miss Giralda," said the housekeeper, in an undertone. "This is a rugged path, so rugged that they won't dream of our being on it. I never rode on it but once, and then I was in haste to visit my dying sister, and the road was impassable by reason of the freshets."

With much inward trembling, Giralda followed her leader.

The path, narrow at best, was rugged enough. The branches of trees brushed the travellers as they rode along, occasionally almost sweeping them from their seats. The descent was steep—so steep that it was quite impossible to maintain an upright position.

"We shall have a cold night for the season," said Mrs. Plumpton, picking her way carefully. "All the better for the horses, though, Miss Giralda. You can begin now to see the path ahead."

Giralda fancied that she discerned the path winding in and out like a thread among the coppices, and losing itself for a space, only to become apparent a little later, crossing the stony barrens and ridges in its continual descent until it was lost in the distance.

"We are surely safe from pursuit on this path!" she said, with a sigh of relief. "You were right, Mrs. Plumpton. They won't think of searching for us here!"

Mrs. Plumpton was puffing heavily with her unwonted exertion, and her reply was incoherent.

"Lord Grosvenor was to call upon me at the Park in the morning," continued the young girl, with another sigh, unlike the first. "What will he think to find me gone? He will be so anxious, so frightened. I wish I had left a message for him!"

"Your message, Giralda, would have been first delivered to my lord," said the housekeeper, in a wheezy voice. "There ain't a servant at the Park but would give their souls right up, if it would satisfy his lordship in his tearing moods. I am the only person you can trust. Wild horses wouldn't tear your secret from me! When you get to Peggy's you could drop Lord Grosvenor a line, you know, miss, and one of his thoroughbreds would make nothing of the distance to the Burnt Downs."

At this juncture in the conversation, a closer attention to the ruggedness of the path became necessary, and a silence ensued.

Giralda lived over again in her own thoughts the events of the evening—her first interview with her young lover—and the interviews which followed that happy one, shrouding her present in darkness.

"Will the wrong ever be made right?" she asked herself, with a wild glance upwards at the calm stars. "Will justice ever be done in this world?"

The night deepened. The hill, or mountain, on which Trevalyan Park was perched had been safely descended. The mountain path had turned now into a wider road, which was, however, full of unpleasant inequalities, and which also in many places dangerously skirted precipices and pitfalls.

The fugitives halted to rest their horses, and to look upwards at the Park.

Lights were flashing from every window of the mansion, and gleamed from the stables.

"They have discovered that we have taken the horses," said Mrs. Plumpton, "but they have not discovered which way we went. They will naturally think," she added, "that we have made for the Eagle's Eyrie!"

They looked a while longer, and then turned and rode forward on their lonely journey through that desolate night.

And up on the heights, in the great mansion, in Giralda's deserted room, the old marquis was kneeling, his grand head, with its clustering white curls, bowed in utter anguish, his rugged massive features wet with bitterest tears, and his voice calling vainly upon Giralda to return, protesting that he loved her and trusted her through all.

And out on the rugged mountain roads, with plenty of assistants, Lord Adlowe, full of vengeful hatred, rode swiftly to and fro, searching for the maiden whom he had sworn should be his wife!

(To be continued.)

DR. LIVINGSTONE.—A letter has been received at the *New York Herald* office in London from a relative of the United States Consul at Zanzibar, which adds a little to what is already known of Dr. Livingstone.

The writer says that letters have been received by the British Consul from Dr. Livingstone, dated August 8, 1868, stating that he was then in good health; and that for a year previous he had been exploring a section of country to the south of the Tanganyika Lake, which contained many small lakes, which he claims to be the true sources of the Nile. Dr. Livingstone stated that he had heard that two sets of supplies had reached Ujiji from Zanzibar for his use, but that he had not yet been there for them; that he would ask that a further supply might be sent there—and among the articles he wished were included nautical almanacs for the years 1869 and 1870—which looks as though he purposes remaining in the country yet a long time. He gave no hint as to his intentions for the future.

TRUE LOVE AND FALSE.

CHAPTER XVI.

GRACE's quiet life stole on after this as usual. She grew more and more necessary to the little household, and they to her. She did her best with the children, and they loved her. But for the old pain at her heart, the memory of Seth, and remorse for her own conduct to him, she might have been happy; but she never looked forward. There seemed nothing in the future for her.

One day an event happened in the household. A letter reached Mrs. Mathews which told her that her sister was coming to pay her a visit. The whole family were in a state of excitement. The interval was spent in preparations for her reception. And at last a carriage really drove up to the door, and set down before it a lady, nurse, and two children, who were welcomed by the whole family in a body, and brought triumphantly into the parlour.

The moment Grace beheld the lady she remembered to have seen her before, and when Mrs. Mathews said: "Mrs. Atherton, my sister—Mrs. Bartholmæ," she knew where and when they had met before. This was Adolph's wife, who had given her the letter to his father in the garden of the old house. This was the woman who had cheated her of her first love.

The colour was a little higher than usual on Grace's cheek, but it was not because any love for Adolph lingered in her heart. The lady, for her part, did not remember Grace; indeed, she took little notice of her. She seemed to be very sad, and had long confidential talks with her sister, from whom she returned with eyes and cheeks swollen with weeping. From what she heard, Grace gathered that Adolph was in some way to blame. At last her curiosity became uncontrollable, and she said to Mrs. Mathews:

"Your sister is not quite well, I think, Mrs. Mathews?"

"She is well enough in health," said Mrs. Mathews, "but she is very wretched, and it will do me good to talk the matter over to you. It is all her husband's fault, poor girl! For my part I am sorry she ever married him, although he is very handsome and accomplished, and very much in love with her, but I had no opportunity of advising her when she chose him. He took to gambling. He had luck at first, wonderful luck, and the mania took possession of him. When he came into possession of his property he still continued the evil habit. At first his luck was as good as ever, but soon it changed—it is always so, they tell me—and he began to lose. He has mortgaged land, risked and even lost his mother's diamonds. The end will be beggary and destruction. No wonder she is sad, poor girl."

"No wonder," said Grace, with a strange expression on her face. "Ah, no wonder. Thank you for your confidence, Mrs. Mathews. You shall never regret it."

"Why, of course I know that you will not gossip about it," said the lady. "I know you better than that."

But the look upon Grace's face puzzled her greatly. It was a look of power.

It was a holiday. The children had all been sent to visit Mrs. Mathews' mother out of town, and Grace was left quite to herself. But she could not employ herself in any way. She could not sew; she could not read. Alone in her own room she took a little leather case from her trunk, and carefully examined something that lay within. Then she paced the floor and thought earnestly and long of something that was deeply interesting to her.

At last the sound of voices mingled with sobs fell upon her ear. They came from the room which Mrs. Mathews called her own, but which was really devoted to the use of every member of the family. To-day they were all away, however. The toys were picked up, the doll's needlework put away, the picture-books piled on their shelves, and Mrs. Mathews

and her sister were alone within its quietness. It was Manette who was weeping.

Grace hesitated a moment; then murmuring to herself, "It is for a good object," slipped off her shoes, and stole on tiptoe to the door of the room. The crevices at the sides were wide. Little Ned's swinging on the door had rather hurt the hinges, and the conversation was plainly audible. The first words Grace heard were these:

"What shall we do, Rosalie—I and my children? I have knelt and besought him. I have put my babe into his arms and said: 'Look you, *mon ami*, this will be a beggar; and still he persists, still he goes night by night to that place of perdition. Ah, my sister! what shall I do?"

"He is a brute," said Mrs. Mathews. "You make too many excuses for him; he is a brute!"

"Ah, no," cried Manette, with her pretty French accent. "He is in all else best of best; he loves us; he means well. It is hope that leads him on—hope to retrieve all."

"It is the love of play," said Mrs. Mathews, "and he is an idiot. There, now, don't look angry. I'll make Mathews talk to him. If there is a sensible person in the world, it's my William."

"If I cannot prevail, it is of no use," said Manette. "There will come an end at last, but I fear that it will be a terrible one. To-night he will go again to that place. Once I followed him; once I meant to tear him from the table with my own hands—to fling myself at his feet before them all, and cry: 'It is our home you fling away upon the dice!' but I had not the courage; before the bright windows I stood still, I dared not go the door. I returned home. I only wept. Ah, they have strength and courage, these men. We women have only tears, and what do they avail?"

"You poor little soul!" said Mrs. Mathews. "Of course you couldn't enter such a place. Oh, when I think what men are sometimes, I feel so thankful for my good William. I might have had a richer man or a handsomer, but there is not such a good one in all the world."

"Adolph is good, too; he is more devoted than your William," said Manette. "He calls me his angel still—"

"Much good that does," said Mrs. Mathews.

"His sweetest and most beautiful," sobbed Manette. "Oh! he loves me, but there is no hope. I feel sure that ruin will come. At last he will stake the mansion, the land, and he will lose. Fortune has abandoned him, and we shall be beggars. Listen. Last night, in his sleep, he tossed and muttered. I heard him say: 'Everything is gone but the estate. Fortune will turn to-night. I have calculated the chances. I will risk all, that I may win. Yes, Manette, you shall be happy yet—happy and rich!' Ah! even in his sleep he loves me, Rosalie."

"There is a comfort in that through everything, I can't deny," said the other wife. "But suppose he should do what you fear? If William were only in town! Dear, dear, what can we do?"

"Nothing," said Manette. "He avoids me purposely, that I may extort no promise from him. Where he has hidden himself to-day I do not know, but to-night he will go to — Street—you know the place by sight, with the large plate-glass windows, and the restaurant below—as surely as he lives. It is his destiny. Heaven alone can help us!"

She sank upon her knees as she spoke, and hid her face on her sister's bosom, and Grace slipped away.

"Heaven alone!" she repeated, with that strange look of power upon her face; "but He may make me His instrument."

Then she put on her bonnet and cloak, and slipping out of the house, sought the office of Jabal the Jew.

It was a quiet, dingy place. Two young clerks were busy in the outer office, and the old man sat in a little room of his own. When Grace entered, his beautiful dark eyes lit up, as they often lit in her presence, and he arose to conduct her to a seat.

"It is not often you so far honour me, dear lady," he said, softly; "may I hope that I may be of some service to you?"

"My kind friend," said Grace, "I came here to ask your aid and protection. To-night I must go to No. —, — Street. I cannot go alone. Will you escort me?"

"Escort you there?" cried Jabal. "You do not know what you ask! It is —"

"It is a gambling saloon," said Grace. "I know that. I desire to watch one of the men who will be there. I may desire to speak to him."

"Who is this man?" cried Jabal, trembling in every limb. "What is he to you?"

"Nothing," said Grace, calmly. "Less than nothing."

"Is he your enemy?"

"No."

"Yet you desire to follow him to such a place."

"Yes," said Grace, "I do."

"Will you tell me his name?" asked Jabal.
"It is Adolph Bartholmæ," said Grace.
The old man suddenly turned from her, and dropped his head upon his hands. A bitter moan escaped him.
"Adolph Bartholmæ!" he repeated. "Adolph Bartholmæ! No—no—I cannot, I will not. Why should you care so much for that bad man?"

"I tell you that he is nothing to me," said Grace.
"Old friend, will you not trust me, and give me your protection, without demanding explanation? I have done things no other woman ever did before, but what I do you shall see for yourself. Trust me, and help me; will you not?"

Old Jabal turned towards her, and laid his hand upon her head.

"Yes, child," he said, "I will trust you, and I will aid you, and harm shall not come near you while I am by. I will go with you to-night, and serve you, if I can." But his voice was very sad, and his eyes had lost their sparkle.

A fancy that once before had crept into Grace's mind, that perhaps Jabal, old as he was, loved her, flitted through it now, but she put it away in terror.

"I cannot lose my friend until I am sure," she said; "I will not let imagination torment me."

"You will meet me at dusk," she asked, "at my own door?"

"Yes," said Jabal, "I will do whatever you ask." Grace arose.

"Until then, adieu," she said.
"Adieu," said Jabal.

He stood looking after her as he hurried down the street. She saw him as she turned the corner, and long after she had vanished from his sight, he stood where she had left him, his eyes fixed upon the spot where she had disappeared, muttering to himself:

"Adolph Bartholmæ! Adolph Bartholmæ! does she love him still? Can it be that she still loves him?"

When Grace returned home, she found poor Mrs. Bartholmæ sobbing without concealment on her sister's bosom. During Grace's absence Adolph had been to see his wife, and there had been a long conversation, which had proved to the women how hopeless matters really were. Adolph was full of the gambler's mad hope of luck at last, and the fears of his poor wife were increased tenfold. She did not even endeavour to silence her sobs when Grace entered.

Nor did Grace pretend any ignorance of them. She approached the unhappy wife and knelt down beside her.

"Madam," she said, "I know the cause of your grief; I sympathise with it, and I believe that I, and I of all the world, am able to assist you."
The poor woman turned her tear-filled eyes upon her.

"No," she said, "you cannot know. In this no one can help me."

"Your husband, Mr. Adolph Bartholmæ, has fallen into the evil habit of gambling," said Grace. "You fear that he will even stake the house you live in, and the land on which it stands, at the gambling table. You fear rightly, I believe; a gambler will stop at nothing. But I can prevent this. I can, and I will."

"You!" cried both women at once. "You!"

"Who are you?" asked Adolph's wife.

"I am Grace Atherton, once Grace Garrick," said Grace.

"Grace Garrick," cried Manette. "Ah, I remember now. You are the girl to whom his father be- trothed him; to whom everyone believed he would be married. Ah, you hate him. You will hate him. My poor Adolph!"

"I will not harm him. I will save him from him- self," said Grace. "I will take him to-night from the gambling table, and make him promise in your presence never to play again."

"You—what power have you?" cried Mrs. Mathe- w's.

"I have means by which I can influence him," said Grace.

"You more influence than I?" cried the wife.

"You are mad! He cares nothing for you; he never did."

"And I care nothing for him," said Grace. "You shall not think that for a moment. The most wretched beggar in the street is more to me now than Adolph Bartholmæ. But I will bring him into your presence to-night, and there make him promise all that you could desire. Do not sleep until I re- turn, if it be not before midnight."

Bewildered and astonished, the two women could only stare at her in silence as she left the room.

"What does she mean?" asked Mrs. Mathews.

"I do not know," said Manette; "she is a woman to do strange things. Listen! My Adolph jilted her for me. We were married, and he still kept the secret from his friends, from his father, and from her, down to the very wedding-day. On that day all came out; she had her dress ready, her house ar-

ranged. Adolph thought her true to him, and feared that he would break her heart; but on that night she married another man—a stranger, whom Adolph had never seen. It is a mystery. She either had received my Adolph all the while, or on the spot she found a new husband. It was very strange."

"Your Adolph had no right to complain, but it was strange," said Mrs. Mathews. "Some old beau, no doubt."

"No," said Manette. "A stranger to all. That Adolph knows. I think that, under all that sweet- ness, she is very bad at heart. She will harm Adolph; I know it!"

"I cannot think harm of Grace," said Mrs. Mathe- w's; "but this is all very strange. Either she is mad, or she has got some strange power in her hands. We can but wait and see."

And they waited, hoping and fearing, they hardly knew what, through the long evening.

CHAPTER XVII.

MEANWHILE Grace had proceeded to her own room, dressed herself in a plain black dress, wrapped her- self in a shawl, and covered her face with a thick veil. When her toilette was completed, she took from her trunk the leathern case which she had so carefully examined that day, placed it in her pocket, and then left the house, finding old Jabal awaiting her without. It was quite dark, and she took his arm at once.

"Thank you," she said; "it was so kind of you to come. I will astonish you to-night, perhaps, but I shall not do anything wrong, and you will approve of all, I know."

Old Jabal made no answer, but turned his steps in silence towards the locality in which the gambling den was situated.

It was brilliantly lighted, and the lower part was a restaurant. On the threshold the old man paused.

"Of course, you know that a woman cannot enter the place openly," he said, "but I have contrived that you shall be admitted. I have bribed the prop- rietor to place us where, unobserved, we can wit- ness the operations of this Adolph Bartholmæ, and hear every word that he utters. He will come to us in a moment. There—that is he."

In a moment more a dissipated-looking man of about forty advanced, with a sort of bow. Jabal re- turned it.

"This is the lady," he said.

"Follow me, then," said the man, and led the way up a private staircase into a little room, at the end of which was a door with a curtained window in it.

"I shall put out the light," said the man, "and you can see through the lace without being seen yourself. You can hear, too, if you like. Mr. Bar- tholmæ sits there—always in the same chair; he thinks luck runs with the grain of the table. Ha, ha! Nobody will disturb you. It's very irregular, but I am always glad to oblige a lady."

And pocketing the money which Jabal slipped into his hand, the man walked away, closing the outer door after him.

Grace and her companion stood looking through the curtain into the outer room. It was brilliantly lighted with splendid chandeliers—tables were scat- tered all about, and near them luxurious seats of all kinds. A few men, evidently habitués of the place, had strolled in, and as they seated themselves, gave orders to the waiters, who brought in decanters and cigars. Some of these men were coarse and vulgar, but many were elegant in the extreme. It seemed strange to Grace that they should be what Jabal as- sured her they were—the professional gamblers of the city. They evidently were growing rich, rain others as they might, for their attire was costly, and their jewellery genuine; too much of it sometimes, perhaps.

One might have believed the place to be some club- room devoted to the use of scions of the aristocracy. By-and-bye others were added to their number, the pigeons to be plucked by these hawks: boys hardly out of their teens; dreamy-eyed, cadaverous, elderly men; a newly-caught countryman or two, with red face and hands, and bulging wallet in his breast pocket; one business man in a state of intox- ication, and others too many to describe—among the last, Adolph Bartholmæ. How changed he was! how wan! how pale! how different from the Adolph Grace had known once!

She uttered a little sigh. Jabal peered suddenly into her face.

"The sight of him makes you sigh," he said, bit- terly.

Grace shook her head.

"I sigh for the past, not for Adolph Bartholmæ," she said.

And then, with her eyes fixed upon the spot which Adolph occupied, she watched his every movement. For a while he sat in his seat before a long table covered with green cloth, alone; but soon others took

their places near him. The proprietor of the estab- lishment stood at the head of the table. Other pro- fessional gamblers mixed with the victims, and the game began. Grace then saw the little heap of notes before Adolph melt like ice in the rays of a midsummer sun. In an hour all were gone. Adolph's eyes were growing bloodshot, between wine and ex- citement. He drew his watch from his bosom, and staked it on the next move. A moment more, and the watch also was gone into the greedy little box that seemed to swallow everything upon the table. A diamond ring glittered on Adolph's little finger; he tore that off, and it followed. So did the diamond studs upon his bosom. And then, amidst a silence still as death, all the rest looking at him, Adolph Bartholmæ arose, and with a livid face and staring eyes, shouted hoarsely:

"I'll not be beaten so. Luck must turn to-night. You all know that—it must."

"Gentlemen generally find that luck does turn at last," said the man at the head of the table.

"Mine shall," yelled Adolph. "I've not a penny of ready money, but I have the Bartholmæ estate. I stake that upon the red. There are the papers, look at them. You are afraid, all of you. You know my luck is turning."

"Best go home and think of it a night," said one of the softer-hearted at the table.

"We can't forbid gentlemen to play as they please," said the proprietor.

"But you'd like to do it," laughed Adolph. "You can see how the change will come. I will have my revenge. I stake the Bartholmæ estate upon the red."

He sat down, placing both hands upon his forehead as he spoke. The game went on. The red lost.

Again there was silence. All looked at Adolph. He lifted his clasped hands on high and groaned. "Lost, lost, lost! Manette—my children, we are ruined—we are beggars. Oh, heaven have pity on me!"

Then with a wild cry, he sprang towards the man at the head of the table.

"Robber," he yelled, "you shall not have it—you shall not. I will have it back."

"A play is a play," said the man. "I'm sorry, but it's not my fault. Take care! I carry a pistol," and there was a struggle. Adolph was torn from his op- ponent's neck by strong hands, and stood gasping in impotent wrath and won. And into the midst of this turmoil glided a figure which riveted all eyes upon it—the figure of Grace Atherton, old Jabal closely following her.

She walked up to the table, and addressed those who stared at her in amazement.

"Your last play is null and void," she said. "Mr. Bartholmæ could not stake the Bartholmæ estate, because it is not, and never has been, his. The prop- erty is mine."

A laugh followed her words. Adolph stood pet- rified in astonishment.

"Yours!" he cried. "Yours!"

Grace laid a folded parchment upon the table.

"This is your father's will," she said. "If any one will examine it the truth will be manifest. Adolph Bartholmæ has never had any right to the money he has squandered, begging wife and child. I am Grace Atherton, and the property is mine."

"The will appears to be correct," said the man who had opened it. "It is perfectly formal."

"She speaks the truth," said Adolph. "A will was made; the property is hers, but I knew nothing of it."

"I have no doubt this is a mere trick upon us," said the man. "The heiress has an accomplice. Perhaps it will be better for you to leave the place to more honourable gentlemen."

Adolph clenched his fist, but Grace caught his arm.

"Come," she said, "Manette is waiting for you."

And still bewildered and confused, Adolph per- mitted himself to be led down stairs, and stepped with Grace and Jabal into a carriage that there awaited them.

In silence they drove to Mrs. Mathews', and at their first touch the door was opened by Manette.

"My dear Adolph!" she cried, and fell into his arms. He wept over her, but said nothing.

Grace was the first to speak.

"Read that, if you please," she said to Jabal, and placed the will in his hand.

He obeyed, and the others listened, and Manette and Mrs. Mathews in mute astonishment.

When it was finished, Grace said:

"I am the Grace Atherton, born Grace Garrick, who is mentioned in that document. The Barthol- mæ property was, as you see, willed to me; but it was done in anger, and I, for one, did not desire to profit by the anger a father felt against his son. I could not feel that I had any right to do so. It was I who took the will from its place of safe keeping."



[THROWING OFF THE DISGUISE.]

but I could not bring myself to destroy it. That seemed almost sacrilege. I kept it as a token of my old friend's affection for me, and by its means I have saved Manette Bartholmæ and her children from beggary."

"If you, Adolph, will promise never to attempt to extort the means of gratifying your love of gaming from your wife, I will settle all upon her and upon her children at once. My old friend Mr. Jabal is able to draw up the deed, and your old home is still your own for ever."

"You are too generous," cried Manette; "you are an angel!"

"Are you so rich that you can throw away a fortune, Grace?" cried Adolph.

"I have never regarded it as mine," said Grace. "I only assumed its ownership in your wife's defence; if it will make her happy, I shall rejoice. You have little share in my sympathy, I confess, but I hope you will do better."

"I swear never to touch cards or dice again—never to enter a gambling hall while I live," said Adolph.

"Mr. Jabal," said Grace, "here are pen, ink, and paper. Please draw up such documents as are necessary to place all that is left of the Bartholmæ estate entirely under Mrs. Bartholmæ's control."

"You rob yourself, Grace," said the old man. "Ought I to permit it?"

"You ought and must," said Grace. "I would not touch a penny of its worth for my life."

"Nor would I have you do so!" cried Jabal, in a tremulous voice. "You need not profit by the kindness or the vengeance of that man's father."

And seating himself at the table, he wrote as carefully and clearly as could any lawyer in the city the document which robbed Grace of all claim to the Bartholmæ property, and bestowed it upon Adolph's wife.

Then Grace and proper witnesses having signed it, the deed was done.

Manette could only weep for thankfulness. Adolph approached Grace penitently.

"I believed you my enemy," he said, "and you are the best friend I ever had. I have wronged you—I—"

But Grace turned coldly from him, and approached old Jabal. In a few minutes they were alone together.

Then the old man caught her arm.

"Did you do this because you love Adolph Bartholmæ still?" he asked, in a hoarse whisper.

"No," said Grace. "The folly of my girlhood was my love for that man. It perished long ago."

"Yet you have beggared yourself for his sake," said old Jabal.

"I am only too glad to take advantage of the will," said Grace. "I sympathise with his unhappy wife, it is true, but Adolph Bartholmæ has nothing to do with it. Ah, old friend, you think so much of giving up a little money. What think you of one who flung away remorselessly that which was more precious than any fortune could be, than all the jewels of the world, and all the gold of every mine upon it—a heart's true and earnest love—flung it away for pride's sake? Could you believe that any woman would do that? Yet I—I did it."

"You!" cried old Jabal, and his dark eyes glittered. "My heart is sore to-night," said Grace. "I—you who so strangely know so much of me, did you know my husband, Seth Atherton?"

"I did," said Jabal, covering his face with his hands. "I did."

"You remember, then, how good he was, how gentle, how kind," said Grace, "how beautiful—all that a woman's heart could dream of!"

"A wild, reckless fellow, unworthy any woman's love, murmured the old man."

"No," cried Grace. "Wild he may have been, but well deserving of a heart's perfect tenderness. He gave me all the love and duty a wife could hope for; and I treated him with scorn, repulsed his caresses, was colder to him than a marble woman could have been. All for pride! all for pride! Oh, good angels, pity me—all for pride! I broke his heart, I drove him, as I fear, to self-destruction. And since I lost him, I have known how I adored him. I, who turned from his true heart to dream of false and cruel Adolph Bartholmæ, I pay the penalty of my cruelty hour by hour and day by day. I wet my pillow with tears while others sleep; but nothing will restore him to my arms. I have no power to tell my dead love how I love him."

She wept bitterly. The old man drew nearer to her, his eyes sparkling, his bosom heaving with emotion.

"You love him, then—you really love him?" he whispered.

"From my soul," sobbed Grace; "but of what avail is our love to the dead? they do not care for it."

"Even beyond the skies a human love may reach its longing arms, and make an angel happier—who can tell?" cried Jabal. "But what if Seth were not dead? What, if living, he could return to you?"

"If that could be!" cried Grace, "But no, no; the waters of the ocean roll above him; he can never come to me again."

"His body was never found," said Jabal earnestly.

"Have you never thought that he may still live?"

Grace clutched his arm in both her hands.

"Do you know anything," she cried, "Speak! speak quickly, if you do!"

"I know something, but until to-day I feared to tell you," said Jabal.

"Tell me all!" sobbed Grace—"tell me all! You frighten me! You awaken hopes that, once cherished, cannot be crushed without killing me, or driving me mad!"

"Seth Atherton loved you," said the other—"loved you as his very life. At last he knew that you could never feel aught but contempt and hate for him, that his presence embittered your life, and that he could make you happiest by leaving you free. He did it; he contrived that all should think him dead, but he did not die—"

"He lives, then! he lives!" cried Grace.

"He left you free," said old Jabal, "but he did not desert you. In one disguise or another he kept an eye upon you; he knew of every event that befell you. Meanwhile, still in disguise, and under an assumed name, he entered into business in this city, and honestly amassed a little fortune. No one knew that he was Seth Atherton. They called him by another name."

"Tell me the name?" shrieked Grace.

Without heeding her, Jabal continued:

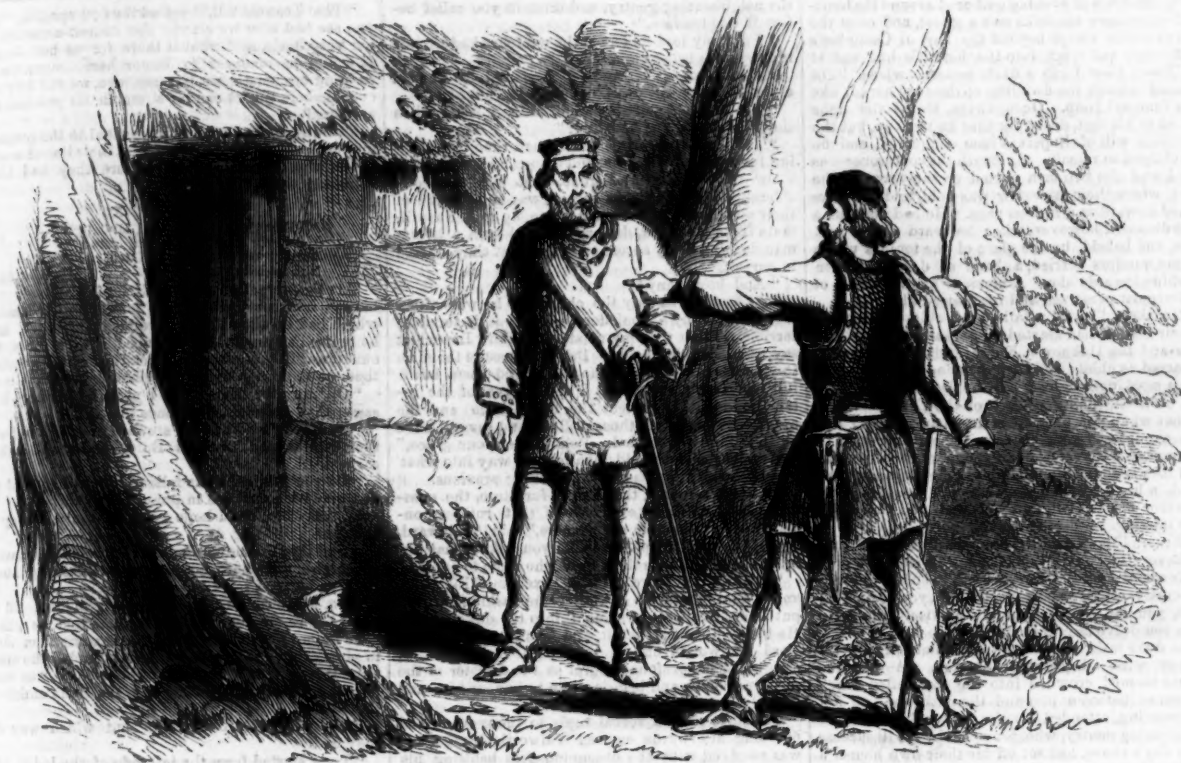
"When you left your native town he knew of your going, and kept you in view. You should never have suffered want, though you should never have known who aided you, had you not confessed that you might return his affection. Grace, you have seen him often; you have spoken to him, you have even made him happy by calling him your friend. Need I tell you the name under which he has watched over you? You suspect the truth, dearest Grace; Jabal the Jew is Seth Atherton."

And as he spoke the man flung from his head the wig of flowing white hair, and untied the white patriarchal beard, wiped from his face the dusky tint that had disfigured it, and Grace saw before her her husband, living, breathing, and warm with passionate love for her.

"Seth!" she cried. "Oh, Seth, can you forgive me?" and flung herself weeping into his open arms.

Perhaps that moment was the happiest of Grace Atherton's life, but the promise it gave was never slighted, and since Seth had bidden adieu to all his follies, and did nothing to cause his wife an anxiety or a regret, the two lived together, like the prince and princess in the fairy tales, "very happy ever afterwards."

THE END.



[THE PLACE OF CONFERENCE.]

THE UNKNOWN KNIGHT;

OR, THE LION-HEARTED.

CHAPTER IX.

Trampling hoofs and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty rout,
The horsemen galloped forth.

Scott

We will now glance back at the Duke of Ellsmere and his host. On the day when those vile marauders made their attack upon the hunting-lodge of the Earl of Castleton, as they were returning rather early from the chase, they saw a horseman dashing towards them with wild speed. The next moment the equestrian had reigned in his bay hard by, and the duke recognised Rupert Vasco. He no longer wore the peasant's garb he had donned on coming to London, but a half-military costume, his head surmounted by a jaunty hat, looped up at the side by a golden cord, and decorated with a heavy tuft of plumes, a coat of mail, on which he prided himself not a little, and a tunic, girded at the waist by a Turkish belt fastened by a clasp of solid gold, and through which was thrust a lance, a poniard, and, a scimitar, while at his side hung a real Damascus blade. At sight of Ellsmere he took off his hat and bowed with mock deference, exclaiming:

"Well, it seems your grace is alive yet. I must offer my congratulations, for we have not met since I saw you lying half-dead the night after the coronation."

The duke smiled grimly, as he muttered:
"That was a terrible mischance for me, Vasco."
"And for me, too," rejoined the strange man, leaning forward, and speaking with a rapid utterance, "I ought to have delivered my message before you went to the banquet, as I wished; and the next time I shall attend to business first!"

There was a brief constrained silence, and then Vasco continued:

"Lionel Walsingham, I have something else of great importance to reveal. You must come with me."

His peremptory manner perplexed and annoyed the duke, but circumstances compelled him to bear much from that man, and he said gravely:

"What will Lady Alice think?"

"Oh, you can excuse yourself upon the plea of business."

And the noble duke was compelled to act in accordance with his suggestion, and sent a message by the earl, as our readers have already learned,

and when Vasco and the duke had parted with the nobleman who was Ellsmere's host, they struck into a narrow wood-path, and rode onward, Rupert Vasco talking earnestly, and his companion now and then giving brief answers.

"Shall I tell you my adventures after I left you in London," said Vasco.

The duke bowed, and he went on:

"When you had passed on to the banquet, I made my way to the 'Blue Anchor,' and the landlord took me to be what I seemed—a peasant, who had come from the country to see the coronation, and I humoured his fancy. Ha! ha! What cared I, since my disguise protected me in a city where it would have been madness to appear in my own proper person. I found several sailors, however, gambling and drinking at the inn, and when the evening meal was over, I had won a round sum."

"But what would the host think," rejoined the duke, "to see a peasant indulging in play, and handling dice with such skill as you do?"

"Oh, Boniface had gone to market, and there was a tall, awkward, simple youth left in his master's place. But at last I thought I must have a little rest, for men like me tire sometimes, and I went up to a small and poorly furnished room, and after sleeping an hour or two, rose and looked to see if it was time for our meeting, and wondered if you would dare break your promise to Rupert Vasco."

"No; oh, no," exclaimed the nobleman, "you now led me in perfect bondage."

A peculiar light shot into the dark eye of Rupert Vasco, and he continued:

"I am glad you know your vassalage. Another time you must not shout 'Stand aside, boor,' when I cross your path. By Jove, I was tempted at that moment to speak out; and I should, I assure you, had I not dreaded the consequences. I, Rupert Vasco, like freedom and abhor chains."

The duke made no reply, and he resumed:

"While I was standing at the window of the 'Blue Anchor' I heard the cries of the rioters, 'Down with the Jews! Death to these miserable dogs!' and I too joined the mob, and plundered the dwellings of some of the richest Jews. Oh! the jewels I took from one house—could you see them, you would covet them for a bridal present to Lady Alice—pearls, diamonds, and rubies fit for a queen, with more than one goodly purse well filled with gold. Then I thought of my appointment with you, and went back to the inn, but you had not come in my absence, and I waited—waited—waited," and now his voice sank into a hoarse, angry tone. "In my impatience I walked the hall, and then the pavement in front of

the old inn. Time dragged on, and no Walsingham; and finally I resolved to go to your London house, and discover why you dared fail me."

"Then you learned what had kept me, Vasco. The horses, terrified by the tumult round the Abbey, reared and plunged, and one of them flung me to the earth. That was all I knew, till I came to myself in my own chamber; but during my illness Marguerite Wharton visited London."

"She will not mourn for you when you are dead," retorted Vasco, "nor will the Lady Alice, I ween."

A half-suppressed oath broke from the old man, but he made no other reply, and Vasco exclaimed:

"Methinks she cares more for the young man they call the Unknown Knight, who, as I have been told, rescued her from death on the moor, and was at hand on the evening of the banquet, guiding her safely home. Mark me, your grace will have to keep a sharp look out on the fascinating cavalier."

"Tush," cried the duke, angrily, "I can manage my own love affairs. And now for the business which brought you hither, and forced me to follow you, instead of going back to the lodge."

"Methinks you forget," rejoined Rupert. "Mayhap the wild birds, the deer, and even the wind may yet turn King's evidence."

And the two now rode on in profound silence till they reached the deserted home of a hermit, in the heart of the forest. This lonely cottage had been rudely built of logs, and was wrapped in deep shadow. All around its low walls grew luxuriant shrubs, and moss lay thick and gray on the humble roof, and here and there autumn leaves stirred softly in the breeze.

"Now," muttered Vasco, "in you hut we may talk as long and freely as we please. No woodman comes as far as this, and I'll wager five hundred ducats that we can be as free from observation here as in any cave of the mountains or the solitude of rugged Cornwall."

With one blow the sturdy Vasco beat open the door, and the Duke of Ellsmere followed him into the dismal room which had been the home of the devotee, with the dark rafters overhead, the rude floor beneath their feet, and the one small latticed window, while a perpetual twilight brooded over the place. Two or three rough benches stood here and there, and the noble and his companion seated themselves, and remained for a moment silent; then, however, the noble asked:

"Prithee, what brought you to London?"

"There was trouble in the camp, and I came to tell you its nature and seek counsel."

And now a protracted conference ensued.

The shadows of evening gathered around the hunting-lodge where the duke was a guest, and over the valleys which swept beyond the Earl of Castleton's rural home, and crept into the hermit's hut, and at last Vasco drew forth a dark lantern, whose light gleamed through the dwelling of the dead hermit like some funeral lamp. Once, twice, thrice the duke started to his feet, declaring that he must go, but the invincible will of Rupert Vasco conquered, and he was obliged to remain. At length the conference was ended, and the two men parted on the verge of the forest where their interview was held, and the duke dashed onward at a furious pace. He had gone but a short distance, however, when he heard shouts and oaths, and beheld, by the glare of the torches which the marauders carried, a band of desperate men marching towards him. A moment more and one of the foremost perceived and recognised him.

"Ho, there!" cried a tall and reckless man, who, as their leader had started in pursuit of the Lady Alice and the Unknown Knight who had rescued her, acted as chief; and then glancing around, added, with a mocking laugh: "Let the Duke of Ellsmere pass on to the hunting-lodge of the Earl of Castleton, but when you look upon the change which has been wrought in your absence, remember hatred to you prompted the attack. 'Revenge' was our watchword to-night, and though we did not have, as we hoped, a hand-to-hand conflict with you, we have left traces of our visit, and you will find the Lady Alice missing."

"Wretch!" muttered the old man; "can it be that you have attacked Castleton's hunting-lodge?"

"You will soon see for yourself," replied the villain, curly. "But mark me, though you escape to-night, you, too, shall realise how awfully you acted when you drove us into hostility."

The duke waited to hear no more, but pursued his journey with all possible despatch. A hundred leagues seemed crowded into the few miles which intervened between him and the place he had left that morning, attended by the earl and two of the neighbouring gentry, who, provoked by the ill success of the day's chase, had set off for their own homes a half hour before he met Vasco. A thousand conflicting emotions tortured him as he rode onward, and the bitterest of all was the thought that Alice was missing.

At length he came in full view of the old hunting-lodge which had been such a picturesque feature of the landscape, and now bore unmistakable proofs of the onslaught of the vengeful marauders, with its broken windows, the breaches in its gray walls, the doors wrenched from their hinges, and the general air of ruin which pervaded it.

All this the duke perceived by the light of the breaking day, for the autumn sun was burning redly above the hill tops, which rose grandly around the lodge, when the nobleman dismounted from his horse, and walked hastily towards the door. As he approached, the old steward and half a dozen retainers advanced to him, while each sad face told its own story.

"Oh! my lord duke," cried the old man, "what a night this has been! Mayhap you have already heard what happened to us?"

"Yes," replied Ellsmere, gravely; "they tell me also that Lady Alice is missing."

"Aye! your grace. I shall never, never forget what she suffered while I remember anything."

"Tell me; oh, tell me. Do you believe her to be in the power of those marauders who attacked the lodge?"

"I sincerely hope not," replied the steward. "The chief in the first of the onslaught thought you and my master here, and shouted a challenge to you to draw and defend yourselves; but since you were both absent, we tried to defend our young mistress and the house to the best of our ability; but what could we do against such fearful odds? When they discovered that you, my lord, and the earl were gone, they resolved to capture Lady Alice at all hazards. I had endeavoured to conceal her soon after the attack was made, but I knew they would discover her. I am strongly attached to my young mistress, and my heart was sinking under its heavy burden, when a gentleman appeared, and offered to take Lady Alice to a place of safety. It seemed, your grace, as if he had dropped from the skies, for the first I saw of him he was standing on the landing of the upper staircase."

"Describe him," cried the duke.

"He was tall and stately, and clad in mail."

"Ah! it must be the Unknown Knight," muttered Ellsmere; and he began to pace to and fro, while the bitter thought flashed through his brain that, had it not been for his meeting with Rupert Vasco, he might have been there to protect his betrothed bride. "Oh! if I had been there," he said to the steward. "Why did you not think to fly to the watch-tower, and ring the bell; that would have alarmed some of

the neighbouring gentry, and brought you relief before it was too late."

"I did, my lord duke, but the wretches had already removed the bell-tongue."

Again Ellsmere began to pace to and fro in wild agitation, but at length he paused, and asked:

"Did they not start in pursuit of Lady Alice when they discovered she had fled?"

"Yes, but they consumed so much time in searching for her in the house and grounds before they knew whither she had gone, that she was considerably in advance; in fact, it was not till one of their own band, who did not come up to the assailants till a late hour, declared he had seen a horseman dashing away across the park, that they started in pursuit."

"And how many?"

"At first it was only the chief, but he was afterwards joined by a confederate. Oh! it is terrible, terrible. What will my master and Lord Launcelot say when they learn all? But I can assure them, on the honour of a servant who has served them faithfully for thirty years, that I and the rest of the retainers fought to protect the Lady Alice and the mutilated ledge from those ruffians, and several have been severely wounded. Follow me, your grace," and as he spoke the old man led the way into what had been a pleasant home the morning previous.

The torn tapestry, the broken furniture, the missing plate, all bore evidence of that ruthless onslaught. "Ruin, ruin everywhere," said the steward, gravely; "but I hope, as I told you before, that my lady will escape with the knight who came to her aid."

"I must go in search of her!" exclaimed Ellsmere, and at that juncture a servant came dashing up, and put a small roll of parchment into the duke's hand. He hurriedly unfastened it, and found a message from Lord Walworth, one of the neighbouring gentry, expressing his profound regret at the disaster of the night previous, and begging him to honour him and his lady by accepting his hospitality.

The duke gave a verbal reply to the servant, and not long afterwards entered Walworth Grange, and was received with the obsequiousness befitting his high-rank. While there another missive was brought him, by an urchin employed by his present host. The missive was traced in bold, irregular characters, and a wild thrill swept through the old man as he perused its threatening contents:

"LIONEL WALSHINGHAM.—It seems you are resolved to set out in pursuit of Lady Alice Villiers; but if you go, you do it at your peril! My band are on the watch for you, wherever you may turn, and if you act in defiance of my warning, your life must pay the forfeit."

The duke's eyes grew dim, his brain whirled, and he staggered back, and sank down, pale and exhausted.

"You are ill?" said Lady Walworth, hastening to join her guest.

"I have had a long, long ride since my business was transacted, and then the state of affairs at the lodge and the disappearance of dear Lady Alice have had a strong effect on me; besides I am by no means as strong as I was before my illness in London."

He paused, and regaining his self-possession by a strong effort, went on:

"The villains threaten me with death should I attempt to go in search of Lady Alice!"

Exclamations of horror broke from Lady Walworth, and her husband said:

"Hark ye, my lord duke! Something must be done to put down these marauders, who are fast becoming the terror of the kingdom. I will dispatch a messenger to call in the aid of the military, for they have a post not more than six or seven miles distant."

The Duke of Ellsmere expressed his extreme satisfaction at the idea his host had proposed, and a retainer belonging to Lord Walworth's family was despatched to the barracks, disguised as a friar, for it was well known that the marauders lurking in the neighbourhood never molested any such person. By mid-day the men-at-arms were careering round the Grange, and sweeping along the high-road, from which the Unknown Knight had turned the previous night, when he bore away Lady Alice Villiers.

The lawless ruffians were apprised of the approach of the military by scouts, and now a hasty council of war was held.

"Comrades!" exclaimed the man, who then acted as leader, "adverse fortune seems to be ours. Since we stormed and plundered the hunting-lodge, our chief, who started in pursuit of Lady Alice, has met the Unknown Knight, and been unhorsed by him and left almost dead on the field after a fearful affray, and Gault, who followed him to the conflict, has been wounded by the same man."

"Who can he be," cried one of the band, "to unhorse our chief?"

"That I cannot tell," replied the first speaker, "but you see just how we stand: the men-at-arms are a our very heels, and what is there for us but flight? It would be madness to linger here longer under existing circumstances, but, my men, we will increase our numbers till we can be a match for you band of soldiers."

The desperadoes willingly assented to the proposal for flight, and immediately took up their line of march to the mountainous regions, where they had their retreat.

CHAPTER I.

All thoughts, all passions, all delights—
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
Are but the ministers of Love,
And feed its sacred flame.

Coleridge.

THE consternation of the Earl of Castleton and his son Launcelot when they learned the disasters which had befallen the lodge and Lady Alice, may be better imagined than described. Rufus Dale, the old steward, had gone to meet them, and apprised them of their misfortune, and Launcelot exclaimed:

"Oh, my poor Alice! how I yearn to see her! how eager she was to meet me once more!"

"Yes, yes," rejoined the steward gravely; and now the Earl turned towards Rufus Dale, and asked earnestly:

"Do you think she has fallen into the hands of the desperado who started in pursuit of her?"

"It may be; but I hope and pray that she may be safe."

"And this Unknown Knight?" queried his master, once more, "prithce, did you see him lurking about the lodge after I left?"

"No, my lord, no. I saw nothing of him, till he stood before me near the landing, and told me what I have before repeated. The ruffians were then busy in plundering the house, and he descended the staircase in the rear unobserved. The sky was then almost covered with clouds, and that was much in their favour."

"Oh! yes," said Launcelot, "but which way did they go?"

"They started from the left side of the lodge, and when the chief set off in pursuit he took the same direction."

"Launcelot," cried the earl, "we must try to find some clue to the mystery which enshrouds Alice."

"Most assuredly I cannot rest till I know the truth."

"But where is the Duke of Ellsmere?"

"He has accepted the hospitality of Lord Walworth, and the ruffians were bold enough to threaten him with death if he ventured to go in pursuit of Lady Alice. At this Lord Walworth dispatched a messenger to the camp, and quite a force of men-at-arms came up for the protection of the families in the neighbourhood, and I hear the vile wretches who attacked and pillaged the lodge are in full retreat."

"Ah!" exclaimed Launcelot, "if Alice has fallen into their power, she must be wrested from them."

There was a brief and painful silence, and then the earl said:

"The soldiery must follow them, and methinks many of the sturdy peasantry would swell the ranks."

"Aye! aye!" responded the steward; "my lady is a general favourite; she is so kind to the poor, and always has a smile for them when they are happy, and a sympathetic word and ready aims when they are in sorrow and suffering."

Thus discussing the particulars of the attack, and various plans for immediate action, they rode on till they reached the lodge, where they paused, and, dismounting, gazed at the work of ruin visible on every hand, while fierce imprecations broke from the earl. From this scene Castleton and Lord Launcelot hastened to the Grange, where the Duke of Ellsmere was sojourning, and ere long were ushered into a pleasant old drawing-room. The first words which passed the lips of the duke, as he met the father of his betrothed, were the following:

"Oh, Alice! who could have believed that any such calamity could have befallen her when we left her?"

"I, at least, never dreamed of it, or I should not have ventured to leave home."

Ellsmere and Lord Launcelot now exchanged greetings, and then the young man said:

"My sister's fate seems shrouded in mystery. From all I have learned, I fear some of that desperate band succeeded in capturing her from the Unknown Knight, who bore her away from the beleaguered lodge. Methinks we had better set out in two bodies in pursuit of our poor, lost Alice—one to follow the flying desperadoes, and the other to institute a vigorous search throughout the surrounding country."

"I fully coincide in your opinion," rejoined the duke; and an hour later a large company of men set out to search the neighbourhood, to see if they could find any clue to the refuge to which the Unknown Knight had carried her, while a formidable detach-

ment of the men-at-arms started in chase of the villainous marauders.

A week passed, and at length a party, headed by the Earl of Castleton and his son Launcelot, approached the castellated old manor-house of Sir George Melville, and Harold Courtney, perceiving them from a high turret-window where he had stationed himself, descended to the apartment where Alice sat alone.

"Alice, dear, dear Alice, the hour has come when I must give you up, for your father and brother are advancing towards the manor-house at a pace which will soon bring them in the shadow of its walls."

He paused an instant, and then went on: "The days we have spent together beneath this roof have been like a bright dream; it will be sweet to remember them during a lifetime."

"And," replied the girl, "to me time has flown fast. How I dread going back to be subjected to the attentions of the Duke of Ellsmere! Oh, Harold, the future looks dark when I allow myself to think for an instant that I must marry one from whom my whole soul shrinks!"

"Heaven bless, and guide, and keep you from such a fate, my own Alice!"

With these words he drew her to his heart, the girl murmuring once more:

"Let us hope for the best, and trust in heaven!"

The next instant the knight tore himself from her clasp, and hastened down the carved oaken staircase, and into a hall hung with branching antlers and suits of armour. The porter pointed to a small room, and, hurriedly crossing the threshold, he stood in the presence of the earl and his son. The cavalier stood erect and stately, as, with a slight bow, he said:

"I am Harold Courtney, gentlemen."

There was something so fearless and yet so courtly in his manner, that Launcelot Villiers was at once highly prepossessed in his favour, and even his father could not help secretly acknowledging these facts. The two noblemen bowed, and Courtney continued:

"I despatched a missive to you, my lord, stating where your daughter might be found, for I knew you must feel a keen anxiety as to her fate; nay more, some of the servants belonging to Sir George Melville's household told me that a band of men-at-arms had been sent towards the mountains in quest of the lost lady."

"Oh, yes," replied the earl, "we have had a world of anxiety, and are only too glad to find her here."

"And I," observed Launcelot, "I am most happy to gain some clue to my sister's hiding-place."

There was a brief silence, and then Courtney turned towards the earl and exclaimed:

"Mayhap you will marvel that, after you forbade Lady Alice ever to see me more, under penalty of being confined to her room, or walled up in a convent, I should dare follow her from London to the hunting-lodge where you came to spend the shooting season; but only deep, absorbing love for your daughter brought me thither. When I reached the lodge I found it had been attacked by a vile horde of marauders, and that one ruling purpose seemed to be to gain possession of your daughter. I scaled the walls, rushed on the battlements, and, quick as thought, darted down the staircase which led to the second landing. In that hour of peril, when her heart was sinking with terrible dread, and the old steward, who had exerted every effort in his power to save her, stood near in wild dismay, I told him that I would rescue his young mistress. This is the third time that it has been my privilege to serve Lady Alice Villiers—once during the last winter, when I found her perishing on the moor; again during the terrible scenes of the riot in London, when her escort had been felled to the ground; and now flying with her to a place of safety, when her home was besieged by ruthless assassins."

"Sir knight," said Launcelot, springing towards him, and clasping his hand with a fervent pressure, "how can I thank you as I ought, for to you I owe a debt of gratitude which I fear will never be cancelled?"

"Young man," said the earl; "I, too, offer you my sincere thanks for all these services, but you will understand the feelings which prompted my language to Alice when I gave the mandate to which you refer; she is, as you know, the betrothed bride of another."

"Ah, my lord, that is most unfortunate, for with her own lips she has told me that she looks forward to a life with him as to a living death; and, with all my deep love for her, you will not wonder that my whole heart rises against such a sacrifice."

"Does Alice return your love?" asked the father, lifting his eyes to the handsome and impressive face of the Unknown Knight, and instinctively feeling that he would be a most formidable rival to such a man as the Duke of Ellsmere.

"Yes, my lord; it was a happy, happy moment for me when she confessed that I had won the love of her young heart."

The Earl of Castleton rose from his seat, and began to pace to and fro, and Launcelot anxiously watched the gathering storm visible in his father's whole manner.

"Sir knight!" he said, at length, pausing before Courtney; "this is most unfortunate for you both. Alice Villiers must keep her promise to the Duke of Ellsmere."

"That promise she was compelled to make, as I have reason to believe," rejoined Courtney; "besides, were I blessed with the vast fortune and high rank of him whose attentions you have compelled her to receive, you might think differently of my suit."

"You speak plainly," observed the earl; "but I confess all these considerations have weight; indeed, they do with most parents when they are about settling their children in life."

"Poor Alice!" said Harold Courtney, gravely. "She envies the humble peasant girl as she looks forward to the future, with the Duke of Ellsmere as her husband. Oh, my lord! it is a terrible wrong to compel her to go to the altar with one from whom her whole nature shrinks."

"And, mayhap," replied the father, and a sudden glitter shot into his eye, "you will seek to lure her into a secret marriage."

An indignant flush swept over the young man's face, and his haughty lip curled.

"Nay, nay," he exclaimed. "I must still be the Unknown Knight to you, or you would understand me better. I should scorn such a step, for had I been thus disposed, I might have married her, since she has been under my protection."

"Father," cried Launcelot, "I admire Harold Courtney's noble and chivalrous nature. I sympathise in his love for Alice, and from my heart I wish they could both be happy."

"Tush!" said the earl; "it can never, never be."

And now Harold Courtney advanced to Launcelot, and exclaimed:

"Thank you—thank you, my lord, for this kindness. There are moments when a wish seems almost a prophecy; but I need not detain you longer from Lady Alice."

And, leaving the room, he soon reappeared with Lady Alice leaning on his arm.

The next moment the long-parted brother and sister were folded in each other's arms, and then her father advanced and with far more than his wonted tenderness greeted her who had just been restored to him.

"To this gentleman," said the girl, earnestly, "I owe a treble debt. Oh, my father! oh, Launcelot! would that I might ensure his happiness and my own by sharing his destiny!"

"Be assured," replied the earl, "I fully appreciate the great service Harold Courtney rendered me, but under the circumstances all these hopes are vain; you are the betrothed bride of the Duke of Ellsmere, and I know he will never give you up."

"Dearest Alice," murmured the cavalier, "let us still trust in heaven, and hope that a brighter day may dawn for us. Adieu!" and bending his imperial figure, he fondly kissed her lips and brow, held her head in a lingering clasp, and quitted the apartment.

Sir George and Lady Melville now entered the room, and to them also father and brother expressed their deep gratitude for having sheltered the Lady Alice; and, ere the earl and his family took their leave, the baronet alluded to the friendship which he had long cherished for Harold Courtney, expatiated warmly on his noble character, and declared him to be the equal of any man in England, though his name was not enrolled among the British peerage.

"My lord," he said, earnestly, "I would gladly give any of my daughters to him who has been styled the Unknown Knight, but he loves your daughter as only such a nature as his can love."

"I regret to hear that he has been thus unfortunate, for Lady Alice must marry the Duke of Ellsmere."

"But mayhap, my lord, the sacrifice of such beauty and youth to an old man like him may yet be prevented. Heaven may not smile on such an alliance."

"There I fully agree with you," said Launcelot. "On our journey from Glenburn I have been using every effort to shake my father's purpose, but he seems obdurate."

"On that point I am firm," said the earl; "and now let us dismiss the subject, and ere long they were journeying towards Walworth Grange."

"And where—where is the Duke of Ellsmere?" asked Alice; "why am I spared his companionship to-day?"

"He is suffering much from a feverish attack, but as soon as he is able to bear the journey, we are all going back to London."

Days wore on, and the duke was rapidly con-

valescing, and two weeks from the time when she left the old manor house they were all on their way back to their city home.

The shadows were lengthening on the broad meadows, and the sun sinking lower in the November sky, when the travellers stopped at a wayside inn, which was the best they had found during their journey, for a night's lodging. On approaching the public-house, attended by a brilliant retinue, a woman, mounted on an ill-looking horse, with shaggy mane and wild eyes, advanced towards the cavalcade. She wore a riding-habit of black cloth, and a steeple-crowned hat, and the face beneath it had a look of firm determination. Fixing a keen glance upon the cortege, when she came opposite the Duke of Ellsmere, riding at Lady Alice Villiers' bridle-rein, she paused suddenly, as if transfixed, for a moment, waved her small brown hand thrice, and exclaimed:

"Beware! beware! beware!"

Alice started, and a look of eager inquiry shot into her lustrous blue eyes; the next instant the truth came flashing back upon her. She had seen that face, not long after the coronation, in London.

And the Duke of Ellsmere, how did he receive the warning words and gesture of this strange woman? He turned towards Alice, and said:

"Did you hear that mad woman?"

"Madness is a terrible misfortune," replied the lady.

The acute ear of Dame Margery caught the language of the old nobleman, and her bronzed face flushed, her cheek burned, and her eyes flashed with indignation, till it seemed as if some statue had kindled into life. For a few moments the impulse was strong upon her to pour forth a perfect avalanche of accusations, which should make that man reel in his saddle, but a second thought forbade it.

"This is not the best opportunity," she muttered.

"I will bide my time."

The cavalcade swept on towards the public-house, and the innkeeper, his wife, and servants, were soon busy in providing for the wants of their noble guests, and the inn swarmed like a beehive.

As Alice retired to her room, she knelt in earnest prayer, and then rising, thought, with a pleasurable thrill, of her life at the old manor-house, and the future stretching away before her. At length she heard a tap at the window, and, moving towards it, perceived a face pressed hard against the lattice.

"Do not shrink," said a low, clear voice. "Lady Alice Villiers need never fear me. But I must have a brief interview with you before you go on to London. I am the woman who visited you in your city home something like three months ago."

"Come in, then," replied Alice, and with the assistance of the woman, she opened the casement and admitted Dame Margery. As soon as she found herself in the girl's room, she said:

"I have thought much about you since I left you in London, and now tell me all that has happened."

The girl then proceeded to relate the circumstances with which our readers are already familiar: her father's command that she should never more meet the Unknown Knight, and the penalties which would follow disobedience; their sojourn at the old hunting-lodge, whither the Duke of Ellsmere had accompanied them; the fierce attack of a band of villainous marauders, and the opportune arrival of the Unknown Knight; their flight to a place of safety, and Harold Courtney's conflict with two of the horde who had pursued, and the signal victory he had gained.

"And who, who was the leader of these assassins?"

"I know not, friend."

The dame now began to promenade the room, and at last she muttered:

"Oh, could it have been Rupert Vasco and one of his confederates that the young cavalier defeated and left prostrate on the ground?"

"That I cannot tell."

"I must take means to know," said the woman, gravely. "I have been ill, or I should have been aware of all these facts. I heard, however, that a band of marauders were in full retreat towards the mountains."

"Aye, after a detachment of men-at-arms arrived they took to flight like a routed army."

The woman mused for a few moments, and then said:

"But, to drop this subject, have you any idea as to the duke's plans? Does he look forward to a speedy marriage?"

"Yes, he has spoken something which has filled my heart with many apprehensions. I fear he will insist on my becoming his bride as early as Christmas, and now it is the first of November. For a year he has been making preparations for an event from which every impulse of my heart shrinks. Oh, friend, I have been very, very happy at the old manor-house, but now life seems dismal enough."

Dame Margery advanced a few paces, laid her hand on the young girl's head, and replied:
 "Do not utterly despond; mayhap I can be of some service in your hour of need. Farewell!" and the next moment the strange woman was gone.

(To be continued.)

EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER XXX.

Speak, speak thy fearful guest!
 Who, with thy bitter breast,
 Still in rude armour drest,
 Comest to daunt me. *Longfellow.*

EDITH MORDAUNT, for by that name she at present must be known to our readers, entered the room where her guardian was sitting, at an unusually early hour on the following morning.

It was rarely that she breakfasted with him. She had always claimed the early hours of the day as undisturbedly her own.

And he, in his turn, was so singular in his arrangements, that it suited him far better to be perfectly independent of his ward. But on this, the morning after she had visited Evelyn Rivers, it so happened that he was breakfasting at a somewhat earlier hour than was his wont, and Edith was at least some two hours more matutinal in her appearance than she had been for many a long month.

"Ah, Edith, this is an unexpected honour," Mr. Mordaunt observed, looking up with his usual sneering expression at his ward. "May I ask to what I am indebted for your appearance to grace my coffee and rolls, and give a zest to my appetite by your presence?"

The girl gave an impatient gesture.
 "I am in no mood to be trifled with," she said. "I am come to talk to you, Mr. Mordaunt, and I demand to be heard!"

"I am all attention," he said, putting down a newspaper he had been reading, with mock affectation of courtesy.

"I am in earnest, Mr. Mordaunt," she said, sitting down near him, and evidently commanding herself by a strong effort. "I am in earnest. I want to ask, first, what is your real name? My own I may never know, but I have a strong reason for demanding yours."

He laughed scornfully.
 "A modest beginning, truly. If I have any other name than the one by which you have chiefly known me, I have assuredly a strong reason in my turn for keeping it secret. If not, why would I use any other? I am not quite such an idiot as the folks who advertise in the *Times* that they prefer Cavendish to Snooks, and intend to use it accordingly."

Edith stamped her little foot angrily.
 "You cannot deceive me," she said. "I know that you had once another name. No matter how I learnt it, but it is certain, and I have now even a clue to discover it if you refuse to tell me. Now, mark me, Mr. Mordaunt! From this time I am not the weak, foolish girl, you have hitherto thought me—the slave of your will, and the easy victim of your plans. From this hour we must be foes, open foes, or—I will not say friends, but at least a truce can be made between us, which I for one will not break, so long as you observe the conditions on your side. Do you understand me?"

He laughed.
 "I must confess myself to be utterly and profoundly in the dark as to your meaning?" he said with a mock bow. "It is very matter-of-fact stupidity, I doubt not; but I really must trouble you to tell me, in plain English, what you are pleased to expect and to demand?"

"That I can soon do," she said. "But this bravado does not deceive me, Mr. Mordaunt. I am but a girl, but my life has made me a woman before my time, and the events of the past week have added years to my age. I tell you that nothing but your compliance with the conditions I make can save me from being a dangerous and undaunted enemy in your path. I fear nothing, now, and therefore I can dare everything."

He evidently glanced at her with some anxiety. But he pursued the same light, careless tone:

"I have serious business on my hands at present, Edith, or I would readily indulge you a little in this new caprice. It rather becomes you, I must say. But as it is, be so good as to speak plainly. Whom do you choose to suppose I am? And, in the next place, what are these wonderful demands? You had better save these pretty tyrannies and caprices for your husband. Or, perhaps, you are only practising them on me!"

She flushed indignantly.
 "Mr. Mordaunt, the day may come when you may repent this insolence," she said, with calm dignity that he had never yet seen in her.

Edith had been waywardly, wilful, passionate. But there was a proud composure in her mien now, which was very different, and far more effective in its character.

It spoke of the woman—not the girl. It told of a force of character and a determination of which he had never dreamed.

And Mr. Mordaunt, in his heart, suspected what he had never yet believed—that a woman, when fully roused, when touched in her inmost affections and heart, is far more devoted and determined than the bravest man. All this rapidly passed through his mind.

But he did not avow it, even to himself, and still less to the young girl before him. The slave of his plans; the purchased, helpless slave; such she had been, and such he was resolved she should remain.

"There may be two opinions about that," he said, after a pause. "However, you are a woman, and a spoilt one as well as a beauty, which in itself is some patent of queenship. Let me but hear what you have in your little head, and if I can set it at rest, I will."

Edith had banished the tell-tale blush from her cheeks, and she was calm, pale, and determined now. She could not risk losing what she had so deeply at heart from any lack of self-control.

Her voice was quiet, and even cold, as she replied:

"Mr. Mordaunt, I have not lived so many years in your guardianship, without seeing more than you are perhaps aware. Shall I tell you what I know from my own observations. I know that you live on the sins and the spoil of others. I know that the name you assume, the wealth you squander, is false. The name is no more yours than it is mine; you have changed it twice at your pleasure. And the wealth is drained from the very life-blood of your victims. Thus much I have seen and know of my own observation. But I have heard and suspected more. I believe that you have been carrying out a deep and life-long scheme, which is now coming to a crisis. I believe that I, and the innocent yet fatal beauty you attribute to me, have been made involuntary accessories of your plans. I believe that Cecil Rivers has, for some hidden reason, been its victim."

Her eyes were fixed steadily on him as she spoke. His did not quail beneath her gaze; but the lids quivered slightly, and his lips moved, with either agitation or impatience, as he listened.

"Woman's childish fancies, a novel-reading school-girl's imagining," he said. "But go on. Let me hear all."

"I have told you what I believe," she said, firmly. "I have not told you why, nor how, I have gained the knowledge. But one thing is certain, you cannot shake it; and I shall act upon it, unless you either confess the truth, or bring proofs to the contrary at once."

"I shall do neither," he replied, angrily. "I am not to be taken to task by a foolish girl, who is a sole dependant on my bounty. Child, be warned. Others—far more matured and of a sterner sex and nature than yours—have defied me, and rued the hour that they provoked my resentment. Some even more lovely and loved than yourself have threatened, and wept and sued in vain. I never yield to threats nor prayers. But I have justice in my dealings. I have arranged for your future welfare; and it is but for you to speak the word, and I will renounce the power you find so irksome, and give you to the care of a wealthy and loving husband. Do you hear?" he said, perceiving that she did not even reply, or betray the slightest emotion at his words.

"Perfectly."

"And will act on my words?"

"Never. The word to which you allude shall never be spoken. I ignore all your fancied power, and never will I give myself to one I hate."

He laughed.

"Fine talking; brave talking. It remains to see how you will act. But you have not told me yet what you want, or what you know."

"I want Cecil Rivers' freedom. I want justice," she said, firmly.

"You must ask his judge, then—not me," he said, scornfully.

Again the little foot stamped impatiently.

"Do you think I am an idiot?" she exclaimed. "Do you suppose that I do not know what I mean—that I do not know that the net in which he has been trapped is your laying—that the charge is made by your planning? Man, you know that Cecil is innocent—you know that he can be saved by a word from you."

"I really cannot follow such flights," he said, coldly.

But still his lips moved impatiently, and Edith saw it.

"You scorn me," she said; "you think me a helpless girl, whom you can defy at pleasure. But it is not the first time your plans have been frustrated through my agency, and it may not be the

last. I will confess I thought it well to give you one trial. Little as I really owe to you, I would not utterly forget that I had eaten and drank at your cost, and that the miserable trappings in which I am decked are your gifts. You have had reasons for this apparent generosity, I know, but it is not for me utterly to ignore it. And for that I gave you one more hope—one more chance; you have thrown it away; it will not be renewed."

And turning to the table with an air of strange coolness, she poured out a cup of coffee and drank it, as if the conversation was done.

But he suddenly assumed another tone.

"No," he said, "no, I will not let this end thus, Edith. You have some strange fancies in your head, that I know you cannot prove; and I therefore shall not attempt to control such madness. But I am free to confess that I have some power which I am ready to exercise in Cecil Rivers' behalf, if you will give me your word not again to even think of him as a lover, and to give your hand at once to Mr. Osborne. On those two conditions I am willing to do what I can for Cecil, guilty as the proofs against him show him to be; still, in some way or other, I doubt not even yet I can do him some service—for your sake."

"For my sake," she said, bitterly. "For my sake! You know well that you would make me purchase the boon by the sacrifice of my very heart's blood, my whole life's happiness. But, beware; you know not yet what your own fate may be. You knew not that the justice of heaven may yet rain down upon you, like hail, when you least expect it. I will not tell you what I know, what I can prove. I will leave your guilty heart in the same suspense that you would inflict on others. I will wait, wait and trust, wait and act, and may God defend the right!"

There was something noble and queenly in the girl's air. Her blue eyes flashed so indignantly, her lovely skin was flushed to so brilliant and dazzling a bloom, and the fairy form was drawn up so proudly that even Mordaunt, familiar as he was with every feature and phase of her beauty, could not but gaze on her with admiration and even respect. Perhaps he might have tried to soothe her, perhaps he might have striven to win her by promises and blandishments from her resentment. But at that very moment the door opened, and "Mr. Osborne" was announced.

Mordaunt muttered "The devil!" between his closed teeth, while Edith, with a short bow and a brief and distant greeting, passed from the room.

Osborne quietly opened the door for her to pass, without even an attempt to detain her; and then he returned to the table where the half untasted viands still stood.

"Well, Mordaunt, you give a cold welcome to a friend. I hope the coffee is as devoid of warmth, for I have not breakfasted; I thought I should find you at that social meal, though I hardly hoped to see the fair Edith; and your ejaculation on my entrance here sounded as if I had come rather *mal à propos*. No confusion of persons, I hope, Mordaunt, between me and the respectable gentleman to whom you alluded."

Mordaunt tried to laugh.

"All very fine, Osborne; but the fact is that you did come at rather a critical moment, when your fair lady love was announcing her intentions in rather energetic terms; and I had not quite made up my mind how to meet her whims. That was all."

"Then I suppose I was concerned in the matter?"

"Partly."

"Did she do me the honour to decline my proposals once more?"

"Something of the kind, I confess," was the reply. "But, to speak truth, I believe I was more the object of her dislike than yourself, Osborne. She fancies that the fate of a young fellow now in limbo depends on me, and, to humour her folly, I told her that if she was submissive enough to accept you at once, I would see what could be done. Whereupon she went off in a serio-comic, tragic flight, which was just collapsing when you entered."

"Really! And who is the young fellow?—no secrets between friends, you know, Mordaunt."

The gentleman hesitated.

"Come—I can give a shrewd guess," Osborne went on. "Is it young Rivers?"

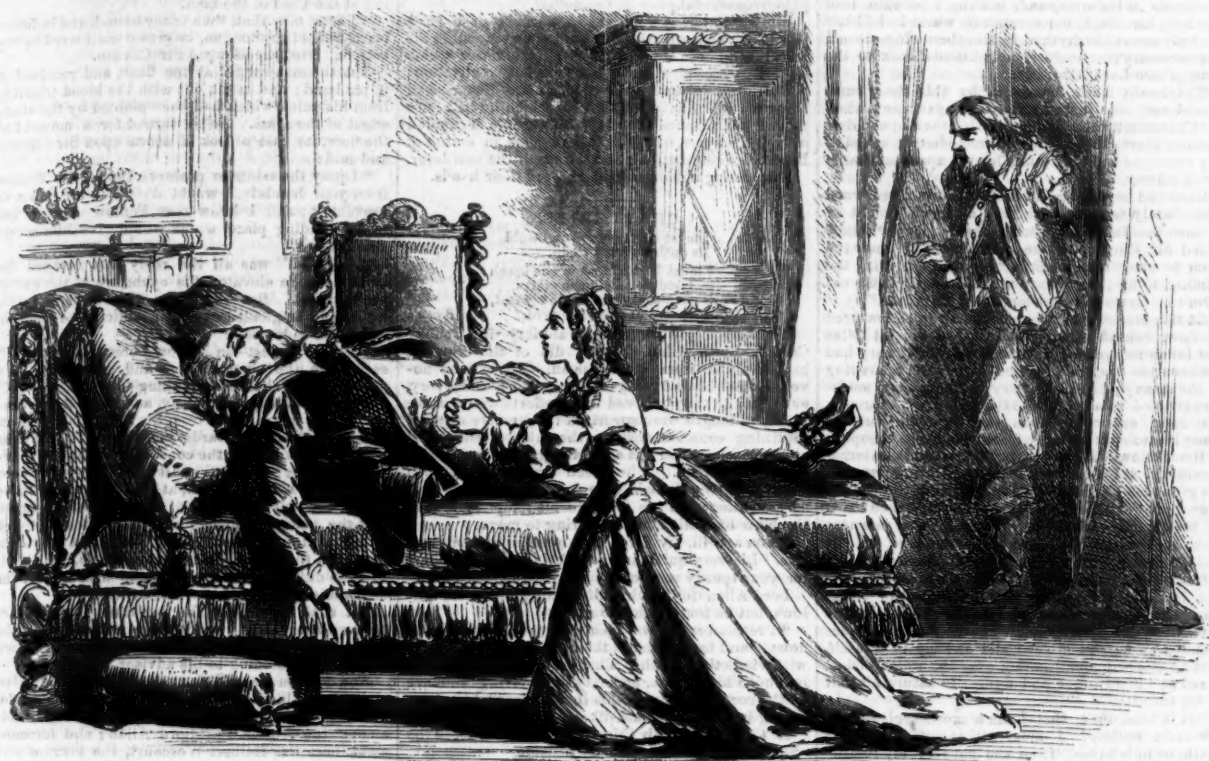
Mordaunt started.

"Is it so soon in the papers?" he said, "I have not seen it."

"Perhaps not, the affair is so peculiar that it has been kept very quiet by the persons engaged. But I think I have some news that may astonish you still more, if you are so unsophisticated in these matters. But just ring for some more breakfast; the coffee is cold, and the kidneys like leather. That game pie is the only eatable thing on the table."

The host obeyed, but the bell was pulled with a violence that threatened damage to the wires, and the order was given to the servant in a harsh tone.

(To be continued.)



CLINTON DEERWOOD.

CHAPTER I.

Alas! they had been friends in youth,
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And life is stormy and youth is vain,
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.

Christobel.

THE stately old Norman pile of Fenlow Castle, which had stood strong and brave through many centuries, and in the onward course of ages, had had many owners—some by confiscated grants from the monarch, for its lords were often sharers in the chances of baronial warfare—some by marriage-dowry—some by descent. By this last means it came into the possession of young Lord Giles, who was not, indeed, the nearest heir, but was made its owner by the will of his late uncle, Sir Manners Fenlow, to the prejudice of the senior nephew, Lord Allan, a middle-aged man, and the father of an only, beautiful daughter. This excited Lord Allan's ire; for he had always coveted and hoped to inherit Fenlow Castle, the home of his youth; and although his uncle had bequeathed him other estates, he could not brook to leave the old Fenlow seat and dwell elsewhere.

And now, fierce anger towards Lord Giles Fenlow took possession of his kinsman's breast. At first, he endeavoured to bribe him to resign his claim upon the ancestral home, in virtue of his being the elder of the twain; but Lord Giles was inflexible on the subject, when anger took possession of the elder, and he accused Lord Giles of taking undue advantage of their aged relative, and thus causing an unfair will to be made.

This was too much for the hot-blooded young nobleman, who had been the soul of honour itself. True, he had often passed hours and days in the old baron's sick chamber, reading to him, playing a game at chess, or assisting him in some plan for the good of his tenantry; but no word of expected inheritance or estate had ever passed his lips.

Rejecting the base imputation with scorn, while all the hot blood of his insulted manhood rose boiling in his veins, he forgot himself, and dealt his elder kinsman a blow, which felled him to the floor of the room in which they had held converse.

"There! thou base scheming villain, who would alter the will of the dead, and rob me of my just inheritance, be thus prostrate, till thou comest back to thy senses again!" exclaimed the excited young nobleman, with crimson cheek and angry eye, and

scornful gesture, giving the prone form of Lord Allan a touch with his foot as he made no effort to rise.

"Ah! thou feignest a great injury, my cowardly kinsman—thou liest so rigid where my hand has placed thee!" he went on contemptuously. "But thou canst rise when thou wilt now; and take what measures thou likest concerning the stroke I have just dealt thee; for Lord Giles Fenlow will have nought to do with thee in future. The hand of him who has thus put doubt upon my honour I can never again touch!" and the young nobleman turned upon his heel, and was about to leave the apartment.

He had reached the door leading into the corridor outside, when he stayed his hand upon the latch to bestow one more glance upon his fallen cousin. Something about the prostrate man, lying there so still and immovable, caused a sudden fear to take possession of Lord Giles' heart. He went back and bent over him, and bestowed a searching, and somewhat alarmed glance into his face. It was pale—too pale! and the eyelids did not stir; and, with a dreadful foreboding, which almost unmanned him, he raised Lord Allan's head, and bent his own ear to learn if he could find pulsation in his breast.

But no sound of heart-beat fell upon his hearing; and apparently no life fluttered beneath the folds of the rich dress the nobleman wore. All was still—fearfully still; and, while he continued to gaze, the silence remained unbroken.

Then that dreadful fear deepened; and with terror, remorse, and strong anguish, which no pen can portray, Lord Giles gazed upon the pallid features before him, while he murmured in a low, heart-rending tone:

"I have killed him! I have killed him!"

For a few moments he held him in his arms, gazing with an awful expression of agony and remorse upon the apparently dead man; then, as the sound of footsteps in the corridor outside fell upon his ears, he seemed to awaken to a sense of his own situation. He laid the rigid form gently down upon a lounge standing near, and had time to withdraw behind the shelter of a thick window drapery close by, when a door was thrown open, and the light, velvety tread of a beautiful young girl greeted his senses.

With a cry of mingled terror and dread, the girl sprang to the side of the stricken nobleman, crying in a voice of deepest alarm:

"Father! oh, my father! what has happened? Speak to me—to your own darling Genifrede—and tell me that thou art not ill, that thou liest so still and silent before me!" and the girl knelt beside her sire, and strove to lift his head and hold him erect

upon the damask-covered lounge. But the effort was futile. The eyes remained shut; and the Lady Genifrede uttered a cry of anguish so loud that it brought a host of servitors immediately within the apartment.

"What is this?" exclaimed Sir Clinton Deerwood, who chanced to be a visitor at Fenlow Castle, and now came rushing in with the others. "Lord Allan lying dead here, and no one nigh but Lady Genifrede?" and the nobleman immediately sprang to the side of the inanimate man.

"Ah! what is this? There is a mark upon Lord Allan's forehead that was never made by a fall! Look you, all, and behold the effects of foul play! Can any one tell me who was last seen with his lordship?" and Sir Clinton Deerwood looked up and questioned thus, while a thrill of pleasure shot through his own heart—for he had guessed the dealer of the blow.

"Yes, Sir Clinton; it was the young Lord Giles Fenlow, who came into this room with our master, Lord Allan, not more than half-an-hour ago," replied one of the servants immediately.

"And know you nought of their business together?" questioned Sir Clinton, with calm voice, while his heart still held its thrill of joy.

"Oh, yes, Sir Clinton; I know it full well, for I overheard my master say, as the two entered (I was just then passing along the hall), that he hoped Lord Giles Fenlow would be reasonable, and not desire to retain the property which had recently been left to him by a childish old man. I did not hear any more; but I thought that it must be Lord Allan referred to the castle, which he had always considered his, and which his uncle has seen fit to give to young Lord Giles Fenlow," explained the servant.

"Yes, that is it; and there has been a quarrel, and then the blow was given. And Lord Giles Fenlow is the murderer of his cousin!" exclaimed Sir Charles Deerwood, in a deep, penetrating voice.

There was a piercing shriek of anguish, so heart-rending that the very blood seemed to curdle about the hearts of that awe-stricken group, standing about the inanimate body of Lord Allan; and then Lady Genifrede sank away into a death-like swoon, and fell upon the bosom of her sire.

All was now consternation. The servants began running hither and thither, with a vague idea that something must be immediately done; but not until the calm collected voice of Sir Clinton Deerwood fell upon their ear did any order reign within the apartment.

That nobleman raised the slender figure of Lady Genefrede in his arms, and, bidding a servant lead the way, bore her to her apartment, where he laid her tenderly upon a couch; then, bidding her tiring-woman use necessary restoratives, he hastened back to the room where Lord Allan lay.

The family leech had been, by this time, summoned, and was just entering the apartment when Sir Clinton returned, and, perceiving that he could do nothing there, that nobleman immediately asked if any measures had been taken for the apprehension of the murderer.

None had been made; and so Sir Clinton Deerwood immediately issued orders that a search should be at once instituted for Lord Giles Fenlow. "And," added Sir Clinton, as the men turned to leave the room to obey his mandate, "be sure you bring the criminal to me; for I have a word to utter in his ear before he meets the punishment of his crime!"

At this moment those near the deep embrasured window, behind whose curtain shades Lord Giles had taken refuge, might have observed, if they had not been too deeply interested otherwise, a swaying of the heavy crimson drapery as the young nobleman stepped from behind its sheltering folds, through the open casement, upon the verandah outside. Then he stole softly away from the house, keeping in the shadows of the thickest trees and clustering shrubbery, till he came to the lake in the rear of the grounds. A little boat lay moored at the water's edge; and this Lord Giles quickly detached from its fastenings, and, stepping within it, a moment later shot along the margin of the lake till he had reached the farthest point of the castle.

Here, the young man sat foot upon land again, and left the boat, after hiding it in the thick, clustering bushes along the bank. Then, for the first time, he spoke aloud again, and his voice sounded so harsh and hard and strange to himself, that he stopped, and, bending over the water's edge, gazed at his own face and figure, to assure himself of his identity.

"It is true, then, that I am a murderer! an outlaw from society! I must either suffer a felon's death, or hide myself from the gaze of my fellow-men. Oh, it is dreadful to contemplate—a long life of isolation, or speedy retribution, should I return and give myself up to justice! And that I cannot do; for I feel that I was provoked to the deed, and it was not a murder in heart! No, no; I cannot give myself up, and let myself swing from the gibbet as a common wretch! Sir Clinton Deerwood would gloat too exultingly over my fate—and Genefrede—oh, my own worshipped Genefrede—would know that her cousin was hung as the murderer of her father!" and the young man's voice sank away to a deep sob, while his strong form swayed to and fro in agony.

At this moment the sound of voices near him fell upon his ears, and he heard his own name mentioned by those whom he now knew were in pursuit. He sank down into the deep grass which grew at the lake's margin, and the steps of his pursuers passed on; and then, with a prayer of thanksgiving upon his lips, he rose and glided into the thick coppice of wood which lay just behind the lake.

With quick steps Lord Giles trod the forest paths, going ever farther and farther into the thick recesses of this wood, which stretched away miles and miles across the country, and was known as the Fenlow Forest. Once beyond a certain limit in this wilderness, and our young nobleman felt certain of escape, for there were deep caves and inaccessible caverns which would give him shelter from all who came in pursuit; and, as Lord Giles had always been a man of stern pleasures and field sports, he knew better than any other who dwelt near Fenlow Forest its secret hiding-places.

At first the voices of those who were hunting him came often to the nobleman's ears. He heard rude words, and curses, and threats as to what would be his fate were he taken; and he knew that no mercy would be extended to him—that his word would never be believed, were he to surrender and tell the true facts attending the dreadful crime for which he must now stand for ever cursed. And so Lord Giles passed still farther into the thick woods, and finally left all sound of voices behind him as he penetrated to the heart of Fenlow Forest.

Night came down and enveloped all earth in her sable folds, and still Lord Giles Fenlow moved forwards. But after a few hours' weary travel in the thick darkness the young nobleman paused, and seemed to feel himself at his journey's end, for he carefully put aside a thick growth of clustering vines, which grew over a flat stone near a running brook, and then, kneeling down, he lifted the stone a little and crept into what appeared to be an opening beneath. In a few moments the stone was replaced in its original position, and our hero had disappeared from the outer world.

In the castle all was consternation still. The

Lady Genefrede had only roused to consciousness to pass from one fainting fit to another.

Sir Clinton Deerwood sat in a room of Fenlow Castle, with a hard, gloating smile ever spreading his features. There were plans within his heart which he felt were now in a fair way of realisation; and he grew jubilant as he thought that fortune had thrown within his grasp that for which he had long plotted and planned in vain. And, while he smiled over his success, those who had gone in search of Lord Giles returned with no tidings of the murderer. The young nobleman had escaped their hands.

CHAPTER II.

I must live by wood and wild
As outlaws went to do.

Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glove,
For leaves to spread my lowly bed,
For stakes to fence the cave.

Scott.

At length joy succeeded anxiety in Fenlow Castle. Lord Allan did not die of the blow he had received from his kinsman. Those who hovered about his bed using all means for his recovery, even though they believed these efforts would prove futile, at length were surprised to perceive signs of returning consciousness in the injured nobleman; and soon he opened his eyes and gazed around with questioning look. The leech who had returned from Lady Genefrede's side interpreted that look, as his patient put his hand to his temple, whereon the blow had fallen, endeavouring to move.

"You are ill, my lord; and must not attempt to rise. Lie very quiet, and everything shall be done for your speedy recovery. You are in good hands."

Lord Allan fell back half-fainting upon his pillows, but he found voice to say:

"I remember, it was Lord Giles who struck me down," and for a moment the nobleman's eye blazed with vindictive wrath. Then he lay almost senseless upon his pillows, and only the reviving influence of the cordial applied to his lips hindered him from falling into a deep, death-like swoon.

At this juncture Sir Clinton Deerwood entered the chamber and advanced to the bedside.

The faithful doctor was at his task, applying restoratives, and assiduously chafing Lord Allan's hands and wrists, and Sir Clinton immediately perceived that a favourable change had taken place.

"You hope to restore my lord to us, good leech?" he asked, as he handed him some required applications from the table, and hastened to offer his aid in lifting Lord Allan to a better position upon the couch.

"I am, indeed, inspired to hope that his lordship may recover from this sad blow. He has already spoken, and afterwards relapsed into unconsciousness; but he will rouse again. Yet I fear it will be some time before he will become as strong as of old, and many weeks—perhaps months—may elapse ere that happy result is attained," was the doctor's reply.

"Ah, he was a base wretch who could so treacherously deal that blow, and the most stringent punishment of the laws of our realm should be dealt out to him," exclaimed Sir Clinton, who lost no opportunity to decant indignantly upon the injury Lord Allan had received, and to condemn Lord Giles.

Indeed, it would have been plain to one acquainted with the true state of Sir Clinton's heart, that he was determined to do all in his power to widen the breach thus inaugurated.

At this moment a servant entered the apartment, and to him he turned, asking:

"Has aught been learnt of this young man, who has well-nigh murdered his kinsman, and then ignobly flown, for fear of a just retribution?"

"Nothing, Sir Clinton. The park and woods have been most thoroughly searched, but there is no trace of Lord Giles to be found," returned the man in answer.

"But you are not surely going to let the villain escape?" exclaimed Sir Clinton, excitedly. "He meant murder, though he failed in the fulfilment of his purpose; and he deserves a prison cell if he escapes the gibbet."

"Every effort has been made for his capture; for when we thought Lord Giles had killed our master, we were all prepared to apprehend him; but now that Lord Allan will recover, it is not necessary that his cousin, whom we all have hitherto loved and respected, should be persecuted by us," replied the man.

"By my faith, thou art a bold youth, who, I perceive, art wishing in thy heart a safe escape to Lord Giles. But I will baulk both head and thee, for I swear that the rascal shall not go unpunished," cried Sir Clinton in a loud tone, and with face crimson with anger.

The servant turned away with a muttered curse upon the meddling nobleman, which did not escape the ears of Sir Clinton; and with rising choler that person instinctively caught a heavy flask which

stood upon a jewelled table near, and sent it whirling at the head of the man.

"There, take that, thou saucy hound, and in future learn to hold thy tongue, or give a civil word to thy betters," cried the enraged Sir Clinton.

But the man caught at the flask, and received it in his hand; and went out with the blood trickling from his palm, which had been pierced by the sharp edges of the glass. As he turned for a moment at the door, he cast a look of scorn upon Sir Clinton, and said:

"I pray the saints to preserve Lord Giles Fenlow from your hands! I would do all in my power to prevent it; and I know that Fenlow Forest has many a hiding place which would give him secure shelter."

"Ah! ah!" was all the reply that escaped Sir Clinton, as he elevated his eyebrows at the exit of the servant. But there was a new idea in his head; and he gloated over it in anticipated triumph, as he said to himself:

"Fenlow Forest—in Fenlow Forest; then we will soon have the young villain; and, once secure in a prison's cell, I shall have nothing to fear from him!"

Several days passed away, and Lord Allan Fenlow slowly convalesced from his hurt. But his heart was not softened towards his cousin. Sir Clinton Deerwood had been the constant companion of his waking hours; and had most artfully worked upon his lordship's mind, which, at best, had not been too tender towards Lord Giles. Sir Clinton insinuated that the young nobleman not only intended to rob him of his inheritance, Fenlow Castle, but also of his daughter, the beautiful Lady Genefrede, and that it was the duty of Lord Allan to take measures for the immediate apprehension of Lord Giles.

"It shall be done. You but utter the wishes of my own heart; and I will at once put men upon the track of my would-be murderer!" exclaimed Lord Allan, after listening to his adviser.

And so men went forth again to hunt Lord Giles, and to bring him back, if possible, to a prison cell for a term of years. But the young lord had many friends among the retainers of Lord Allan; and foremost and these were Halbert Wescourt, the servant who had spoken so boldly to Sir Clinton Deerwood in the sick room of his master; and Wescourt, after listening to the talk about the capture of Lord Giles, had at once determined to prevent it, and to succour the young nobleman himself.

It was upon the evening of the day that the officers of the law had been summoned to Fenlow Castle, and bidden by Lord Allan to institute a search for his cousin, that Halbert Wescourt stole away from the castle and took the path leading into Fenlow Forest. The night was overcast; yet there was a moon which occasionally emerged from the shadowy cloud vapour, and for brief intervals cast rays of light through the giant trees.

Halbert Wescourt left the precincts of the castle and entered the wood. He was familiar with many of the forest paths, as he had often trodden them, having been reared at Fenlow Castle, and being by nature of a bold, enterprising spirit, which loved adventure. So he had frequently spent whole days in these wild woods, and hunted for game or fishes in the sparkling streams which intersected it at different points.

For some time Wescourt followed the principal path, which led into a portion of the forest to the right, then he struck into a narrow one, which branched off in an opposite direction, and held on his way for a full hour. At length he paused, and leaving the path, pushed into the deep woods, seemingly without guide or compass. But the man knew whether he was going, and so pushed on, penetrating deeper and deeper at each step into the heart of the forest. At length he paused, and seemed to be examining the neighbourhood in which he was. A little stream came rushing down over a neighbouring height, and by the gleams of moonlight which now struggled through the tree boughs, he saw its waters flowing past. But he did not stay to watch the pretty sight, for his thoughts were elsewhere. He immediately hastened towards an old tree, which seemed the giant of the forest, and with a careful hand removed the bark from the trunk at one side. There appeared an aperture sufficiently large for a man to enter, and Wescourt at once stepped within the opening, but before he did so he had ignited a match and applied it to a dark lantern, with which he had come provided. Then he carefully closed the ingeniously constructed door, and was lost to the outer world. But we will follow him.

"Lord Giles would have come hither, I think; for he knows of this place, since I showed it to him one day when we were out hunting together," said the man, as he proceeded in a narrow underground path to push his way forward, till he finally emerged into a good sized cave at some eighth of a mile's distance from his entrance at the old tree.

But no Lord Giles appeared to his view within this cavern. No one had been within this place since the last visit of Westcott himself, as the man soon ascertained by the strictest observation: and with a feeling of disappointment he turned to retrace his steps to the open wood again; and he said as he did so:

"I might have known that the young lord would have been afraid to venture here; for he doubtless supposed I should go against him with the rest, and might lead the others to this cave should he take shelter in it. But I am not so vile and base a wretch as that, and would aid the noble young lord by every means in my power to escape those who are so fierce in the pursuit."

Westcott now had reached the opening, and pushed aside the secret springs which held back the door in place, and once again he stood outside.

But he felt at a loss how to proceed, for he knew not to what other hiding-place in this wood he should direct his steps. Two were known to him—both discovered by Lord Giles and himself; but he felt a conviction that the young nobleman would naturally remember this fact, and not hazard his life in either of the places which might prove but traps for his capture.

But time was passing, and Westcott felt it just then extremely precious to him; so he came to the conclusion to search both hiding-places, and then, if unsuccessful, to remain in the wood until he had ransacked every nook, and satisfied himself that there remained no unexplored spot in which the escaped man might lurk unobserved.

But providence was propitious to Westcott's search; and even while he loitered on the bank of the little stream there was a rustling of the bushes near by, a springy step upon the mossy bank, and he turned quickly to behold him who was in his thoughts. At the first rustle his hand was laid instinctively upon the weapon in his belt—thoughts of wild beasts, forest prowlers, were in his mind; but when, in the dim light, he perceived the figure of Lord Giles, extreme joy rushed to his face and eyes, and he could hardly find words to express himself.

"Oh! my dear Lord Giles, can it truly be yourself?—and I searching for you this very minute!" he exclaimed eagerly, as he sprang forward and touched the young nobleman.

But Lord Giles quickly shook him away, and said, in a voice stern and commanding:

"Lay not thy hand upon me, for know that I am prepared to strike down dead the man who dares arrest me to take me back to Fenlow Castle as a prisoner!"

For a moment Westcott was awed and scared by the sudden and unexpected greeting bestowed upon him; but quickly recollecting that he had come to save, and not to condemn the nobleman, he replied:

"You mistake me, my Lord Giles. I am here to help, and not to secure you as a prisoner! Only trust me, and I will aid you with my life!" and the man's voice attested the sincerity of his words.

"Ah, Westcott, is it thou who hast sought me in this wild, unfrequented region? I recognise thee, and I know that I can trust thee, for thou hast ever proved a good servant at the castle in times past!" and the nobleman now snatched Westcott to approach him, and shook him warmly by the hand.

But suddenly Lord Giles snatched away his hand, and cried out bitterly:

"Why dost thou hold the hand of him who has murdered thy master? Think you, man, that I can touch thine, or any man's hand, with mine own red with the crime of murder?" and the nobleman spoke excitedly, while he clasped his hands together in a despairing attitude.

"Thou hast not killed my master, my lord, for Lord Allan has spoken, and is recovering. But yet, it is not safe for thee to return to Fenlow Castle at present. There is an enemy there besides Lord Allan, who is plotting against thy liberty; and I have come hither hoping to aid thee in escaping their hands," said the man.

"I have not killed Lord Allan? I am not a murderer? Thank heaven for that! Now I can brook all else that follows, even the hatred and plotting of Sir Clinton Deerwood, who I am assured is my enemy. His and Lord Allan's conspiracies—I can bear them all, now that I can stand up free from the stain of blood upon my soul!" cried Lord Giles, fervently.

"But thou must not return to Fenlow Castle at present, for they will imprison thee; and there is no knowing what they will bring against thee, Lord Giles, for both Lord Allan and Sir Clinton fear and hate thee, and will not spare any pains to prove most serious charges against thee," said Westcott in some alarm, as he thought of the danger attending his noble friend.

"Well, then, I see no way but to remain here in this friendly forest for awhile, for I have no wish to occupy a felon's cell; still, I do not like the idea of

being a prisoner, even here. I would much rather return to Fenlow Castle, and at once bear the penalty of my deed," said Lord Giles, in resolute tones.

But he was overruled. Westcott spoke entreatingly, and his word prevailed.

"Nay, my lord; permit me to advise thee. Remain here awhile, or it will go hard with thee. I know this, for I have heard both Sir Clinton and Lord Allan plot thy destruction!"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

AUSTRALASIAN GOLD.—It appears that the average number of gold miners employed in Victoria in 1868 was 63,181, being a decrease of 2,676 upon the corresponding average for 1867. The average earnings of each man last year were 104*l.* 18*s.* 8*d.*, as compared with 87*l.* 1*s.* 7*d.* in 1867. There are 2,651 ascertained quartz reefs, and 886,228 tons of quartz were crushed in 1868. The average yield of gold was something over half an ounce to the ton, while the cost of crushing ranged from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 1*l.* 10*s.* per ton. The extent of auriferous land opened up by gold miners in Victoria is 882 square miles, and the value of the machinery and mining plant employed was estimated last year at 2,150,432*l.* The total area of the land held as claims was 100,942 acres, of which nearly one-third was last year lying idle; the computed value of the whole of the claims was, last year, 8,869,504*l.* Twelve new gold-fields were discovered last year, and 329 new companies, with a nominal capital of 3,719,198*l.* were registered during 1868. The aggregate value of gold exported from Victoria to the close of 1868 was 147,342,767*l.* The total quantity of gold exported from Queensland in the six months ending June 3, was 67,080 oz., or at the rate of 11,180 oz. per month. If the exports continue at the same rate for the remainder of the year they will amount in value to upwards of 500,000*l.* for the whole of 1868. The exports for the second quarter of this year showed, however, the slight decline of 657 oz. The immense wealth of the Thames gold-fields in the Northern Island of New Zealand has given a great stimulus to gold prospecting in other districts of that colony. Thus, in Taranaki, Napier, and Wellington prospecting parties are at work, and substantial success is confidently anticipated. Although goldbearing quartz has not yet been discovered in the province of Canterbury, the existence of extensive reefs on Banks' Peninsula has been clearly proved, and these will shortly be tested. Prospecting parties are out in the southern, western, and northern parts of the province, and a thorough exploration, at any rate, will be the result.

NEW RUSSIAN GUN.—Some interesting experiments have taken place at Perm with a new 20-inch gun, cast in the foundry of that town. The trials made with this gun, under the direction of Major-General Pestich, commandant of the Cronstadt Artillery, are described in the official reports as having been very successful, and more satisfactory in their results than has been the case with American guns of the same calibre. The gun was fired 314 times, the projectile weighs 10 cwt., and the charge of powder required for each shot is 130*lb.* The weight of the gun is about 50 tons, the recoil 7 feet, the initial velocity of the projectile 1,120 feet per second, and the percussive force, at a distance of 50 feet, about 10,000 tons. The official papers say this is the most powerful gun in Europe.

THE HEAT OF THE MOON.—This is one of the still disputed questions in natural philosophy, and for a long time it has been held that the moon sends us no heat from the solar rays it receives. Melloni was the first who, concentrating the moon's rays on his pile by means of an enormous magnifying glass, ascertained a very slight increase of temperature. Professor Piazzi Smyth, during his scientific expedition to the Peak of Teneriffe in 1856, confirmed Melloni's experiments. Though the moon was very low, the effect of its rays was found to be one-third that of a candle placed at 475 centimetres from the pile. Lord Rosse, operating with a reflector three feet in diameter, obtained still more perceptible results, from which he concluded that the moon radiated like a surface heated to 360 deg. Fahr. In a paper received last week by the Academy of Sciences, Professor Marie-Davy describes certain experiments of his calculated to throw further light on the subject. Having graduated a differential air-thermometer by comparing it with a very delicate mercury glass, he concentrated the lunar rays on the former by means of an immense convex lens, and could not get any indication whatever, although the instrument could mark 43 ten-thousandths of a degree. He then took an astatic magnetic compass, which could, by its deviations, mark very nearly a hundred-thousandth of a degree. A thermo-electric pile was placed behind the eye-piece of a 9-inch equatorial situated in the

garden of the Imperial Observatory. The lunar rays covered the whole of the pile without going beyond. With this delicate arrangement he found, on the 9th ult., when the moon was four days old, a quantity of heat equal to 0.00017 of a degree Centigrade; on the 20th, our satellite being in its 15th day, 0.00287; the intervening days giving intermediate results. He concludes that the heat received from the moon increases rapidly with its age, but that its altitude and the state of the heavens, even without clouds, has a marked influence on the result.

DECAY OF IRON RAILINGS.—Everyone must have noticed the destructive combination of lead and iron, from railings being fixed in stone with the former metal. The reason for this is, that the oxygen of the atmosphere keeps up a galvanic action between the two metals. This waste may be prevented by substituting zinc for lead, in which case the galvanic influence would be inverted; the whole of its action would fall on the zinc; the one remaining uninjured, the other nearly so. Paint formed of the oxide of zinc, for the same reason, preserves iron exposed to the atmosphere infinitely better than the ordinary paint composed of the oxide of lead.

LIQUID GLUE.

The preparation of liquid glue is based upon the property of the concentrated acid of vinegar and diluted nitric acid to dissolve the gelatin without destroying its cohesive qualities. Dumoulin has given the following recipe. He prepares his "liquid and unalterable glue" by dissolving one pound of the best glue in a pint of water, and then gradually adding three and a half ounces of nitric acid of 36 deg. Baumé. Effervescence takes place under generation of nitrous gas. When all the acid has been added, the liquid is allowed to cool.

Von Fehling has analyzed various kinds of liquid glue, the better kinds of which only became liquid by placing the bottles in tepid water; the more inferior kinds, however, were liquid at the ordinary temperature.

Russian glue—white, opaque, and solid at the common temperature—was found to consist of 35.6 per cent of dry glue; 4.1 per cent of sulphate of lead; 1.4 per cent of hydrated nitric acid; 58.9 per cent of water. Total, 100 parts.

It may be prepared by softening one hundred parts of the best glue in one hundred parts of warm water, and then adding slowly from five and a half to six parts of aqua fortis, and finally six parts of powdered sulphate of lead. The latter is used in order to impart to it a white colour.

Pale "steam glue" consists of 27 per cent of dry glue; 1.9 per cent. of sulphate of lead; 2.5 per cent. of hydrated nitric acid; 68.6 per cent. of water. Total, 100 parts. It is prepared by dissolving one hundred parts of glue in double its weight of water, and adding twelve parts of aqua fortis.

Dark "steam glue" contains 35.5 per cent. of dry glue; 3.6 per cent. of hydrated nitric acid; 61 per cent. of water, and can be obtained from one hundred parts of glue, one hundred and forty parts of water, and sixteen parts of aqua fortis. This liquid glue exhibits a greater cohesive force than that prepared after Dumoulin's recipe. However, still better kinds of liquid glue or mucilage are obtained by dissolving gelatin or dextrin in acetic acid and alcohol.

NEW STYLE OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

Put into a small mortar a teaspoonful of kaolin, add thereto about a quarter of an ounce of sensitive collodio-chloride, and well stir with the pestle until it becomes a smooth paste. Add to this three-fourths of an ounce more of the collodion, and again stir, and pour the whole into a bottle with one or two drops of castor oil. Well shake, and place it aside until the coarse particles have subsided.

Edge a piece of talc or glass for about a quarter of an inch all round with dilute albumen, afterwards coat with the kaolin collodion, and dry by gentle heat, when the talc or glass, if placed upon a piece of white paper, will have the appearance of alabaster.

If the film splits, it should have a trifle more castor oil in the collodion; but the best remedy is to choose a more powdery collodion.

If the film is upon glass, the progress of printing may be examined from the back; but if talc be the medium used, it may be turned back in the same manner as when printing upon paper.

Tone, fix, and wash in the same manner as with an ordinary collodio-chloride print upon opal glass, and mount in a frame or case, to protect the picture from being scratched. It must not be varnished.

After three years' trial, the film has been found not to crack or leave the talc or glass after the picture has been once finished.

Many pretty effects may be produced by putting different coloured papers behind vignettes produced in this way, as whatever colour is placed behind the picture gives a delicate tinge of that colour to the picture.

Oxide of zinc has been tried in place of kaolin,

and that it also gives a good effect, but not better than the latter. There is another point worth naming. For those skilled in the use of powder colours, here is the most delightful surface which can be worked on. The surface has a tooth which bites the colour most perfectly, and the purity of the white gives a rare delicacy and brilliancy to the applied colours. By skilful manipulation and some knowledge of flesh painting, an effect resembling a highly-finished miniature can be obtained. A good print produced in this way on mica, and backed, to give warmth, with cream or buff-tinted paper, makes one of the prettiest, cheapest, and most easily produced portraits for a pocket which can be desired.

GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of those careworn, long protracted years, Some sixteen summers passed obscurely on, A stranger to the world, its hopes and fears, My name, birth, fortunes, to myself unknown. One winter morn (the time I well recall), That stranger drew me from my soft retreat, And led my footsteps to a lofty hall, Where state and splendour seemed to hold their seat. *Anonymous.*

THERE was happiness, there was hope, but there were likewise mystery and anxiety among the sojourners at the Langham Hotel, who lived under the espionage and protection of the Count Ludovico Merhel. For some reason the count expressly forbade the twins going out for the present in the daytime; he had fears of their being recognised, and that would have interfered with the scheme of vengeance which he had laid to entrap Rokewood. At night, wintry and cold as was the time of year, the twins walked in the Park, escorted, Norah by her husband, Viola by Ruthven, up and down and round the broad pathways.

Following them, always at a distance which precluded a searching examination of his person, but yet which kept the twins within range of his vision, and within call, the Count Ludovico Merhel stalked after his friends with the air of a general officer, who for some reason enacted the part of sentinel. This night-walk usually lasted from about seven till half-past eight; then the twins re-entered their hotel, and the evening passed in a manner pleasant to all. Norah and her husband sometimes retired to the apartments which they occupied, but far more often the whole party assembled in the drawing-room (the count excepted) and amused themselves with music and light pleasant converse.

The count, who ruled everything, though keeping himself sedulously out of sight, had earnestly requested that the minds of the twins might be amused in every way, and not suffered to dwell upon the tortures of the past, or the uncertainties of the future. All newspapers which contained allusions to the dreadful murders in the North, to the succession of the countess to the property, and other matters connected with their case, were kept completely out of their sight. Light works of fiction, splendid books of engravings, the newest music, and the prettiest dresses, were constantly supplied by the lavish generosity of the count.

The most anxious of all those young hearts was most undoubtedly that of Ruthven. He felt that to linger any longer in idleness was a sin and a shame, and yet how could he return to the hospital and take the name of Ruthven, when the police had orders to capture the medical student who bore that name, on the charge of stealing the watch which Rokewood had cast out of the window.

He held a consultation with the count, and the result of it was that he resolved to go on to Edinburgh, and find out the house, and the room, and the hearthstone which the extraordinary hospital nurse had said covered the proofs of his noble parentage, and his right to inherit a noble fortune.

Philip was in a mood of the deepest anxiety when he bid adieu to Lady Viola. True, he had rescued her from a fate cruel almost as death—true he was beloved by her with all the impassioned fervour that man could desire, but the poverty of his prospects, the difficulty which must attend the resumption of his medical studies, the double charge, first of illegitimacy and secondly of dishonesty, which had been brought against him, called up all his fierce pride in strong array, and he felt himself unworthy in offering his penniless, nameless, characterless self to the beautiful heiress of James, Earl of Monkhouse. Something of all this the proud but noble young man said to Viola on the evening before he started again for the north. Her expressions of undying love, her assurances that if he sacrificed her to his pride, she

"should pray for an early death, all sweetened the pain of parting, and held out a hope for the future.

"My pride shall grovel in the dust, Viola," he said, "rather than you should suffer one pang for my sake; therefore, I will come back, if it be even from a bootless errand; and, poor and prospectless as I may be, I will consent to receive everything from your hand. Oh, my love—my love, if you knew what it cost me: The finger of scorn will be pointed at Ruthven, the fortune hunter, and—"

"We will live abroad," said Viola, gently, "abroad, where we shall pass unknown and unscathed. Go on, Philip, there is no harm in looking after this dukedom; but I believe, as you do, dearest, that it must all be a delusion. Still, go on and try. Do your best, and come back to me, not disappointed, Philip, because you expect nothing else than a fruitless search, but come back to me poor and empty-handed, as you set out, and we will be as happy soon as Norah and Hammond. He writes home to his relations as if he were living in apartments alone, not married at all. His sisters and father know nothing whatever of the change that has passed over his destiny. And all this atmosphere of mystery in which we are living is depressing to my spirit. When will it all be over? When shall our wrongs be righted? And when will peace dawn upon our destinies?"

She spoke a little vehemently, and leaning her head upon Ruthven's shoulder, sobbed a long sob of nervous excitement and pain.

He soothed her with all the tenderness that was in his heart for her, mingled with all the anxiety which he felt himself. Their parting was not a very joyous one, but hope had sprung up in the soul of each, though it was a hope brooded over by thought, and a something akin to fear.

Philip started for Edinburgh early the next morning. He travelled all day, and arrived at his destination in the evening. He sought out a quiet and inexpensive hotel, and after a good night's rest, proceeded to make inquiries respecting Wylderstone House, now occupied by James Stanton, Esq. The reader will remember that he had before been in Scotland, and under the disguise of a stonemason had attempted to gain an entrance into the old mansion, but at that time the family of the Stantons and their visitors were living in the house, and Ruthven was hiding from the officers of the law, who were seeking for him upon the false charge of Rokewood. All that danger was past now. The police had given up the search for Philip as useless. His person was not known to them, and now, in the first weeks of January he set about looking for the buried certificates.

He found upon arriving at the village, which we call Wylderstone for convenience sake, that Mr. Stanton and his family were absent, and had been on the Continent for some weeks; therefore, he would find no great difficulty in entering, since the house was left in charge of an old lady and a single manservant. At the same time the enterprise was one which required daring, courage, and skill.

Philip sat down in the quiet parlour of the village inn, and attempted to mature his plans. Should he again disguise himself, or should he go as a gentleman? Should he throw himself upon the compassion and sue for the sympathy of the person left in charge, or should he insinuate himself into the house by some cunning ruse, and attempt to drag the long-hidden secret to the light?

Upon the latter course he decided, and accordingly, about half-past eleven o'clock one bright, frosty morning, he set off, dressed with peculiar care, to introduce himself to Mrs. Macneil, the housekeeper.

Wylderstone House was a large, quaint building, with tiled roof, heavy chimney stacks, and projecting windows; it was built of brown stone, and in summer time the great trees which surrounded it shut it off from the view of the passengers along the high road; the carriage way up to it was short, and the grounds were not extensive.

When Ruthven knocked at the quaint door, his heart beat wildly with the daring hopes which the mysterious hospital nurse had awakened in him. Would he find that wonderful document of which she had told him, or was she a deceiver or a mad woman, or, even supposing that she was neither and that the documents had been hidden there, might they not have been carried away and destroyed years and years ago?

The door was opened by an ancient man-servant, a horny-handed, brown-faced old fellow, dressed in an old-fashioned suit, knee buckles and shoe-buckles, and with powder in his hair.

"Might I see Mrs. Macneil?" asked Philip, proffering his card. "My name is Ruthven."

"Pray enter, sir," responded the old servant.

So Philip entered, took his way after the old man, and entered a large dining-room hung around with family portraits, and furnished in a manner costly and antique. There was a large fire in this room. Pre-

sently Ruthven heard a step, and there entered a little, bright old lady, in a cap trimmed with gay scarlet ribbons. Philip had not made up his mind until that moment what excuse to urge for his visit to Wylderstone House. Hastily bowing and offering the lady a chair, he said:

"Mr. James Stanton is, I believe, madam, on the Continent?"

"Yes, sir; he has been away some weeks." The old lady looked at him sharply out of her blue eyes. Ruthven coloured and hesitated.

"Has this house been long in the family of Mr. Stanton?" he asked.

"It has been in the family," responded the old lady, "two hundred years," and she did not once take her inquisitive eyes from his face. "Pray be seated," she added.

Ruthven seated himself. He covered his eyes with his hands for a moment to collect his thoughts. "Two hundred years," he said, musingly. "Was this house ever in the possession of the Duke of Renfrew?"

He waited eagerly for her reply. "The Duke of Renfrew," said Mrs. Macneil, speaking slowly, "is a distant cousin of Mr. James Stanton."

"And has he ever occupied this house or any part of it?" asked Philip.

"Why do you ask, sir?" inquired the old lady, with some asperity.

"Because I have a deep and vital interest in the matter."

The old lady arose from her chair, walked up to Ruthven, and looked curiously into his face. She seemed to be scanning every feature with a peculiar inquisitive look on her own sharp, wrinkled little face.

"Have you any interest in the Duke of Renfrew, young gentleman?" she asked, in a high-pitched tone.

"I have a great interest, at least I believe so," he answered. "Is it not possible, madam, that you know of any of the circumstances connected with the youth of the duke?"

"I am his foster-sister," said the old lady, quietly.

"Still that does not answer my question," exclaimed Philip. "Do you know of any peculiar circumstances that occurred during the time of his youth?"

"And if I do," responded the old lady, "is it likely that I would reveal them to you, or confess that I knew such things? The duke has been a kind friend to me, and I have lived in the family of Mr. James Stanton, his cousin, as housekeeper ever since I was a young widow. If you come, young man, on the part of that beautiful but unfortunate creature, Jane Ingoldsby, I am sorry for you. Is it possible?"—and she dropped her voice in a low whisper—"that you are her son?"

Ruthven grew white as death, he clenched his teeth, and his soul seemed to shake as in a tempest of passion.

Jane Ingoldsby's son, the child of a duke, but no less the offspring of shame and the inheritor of the world's contempt! Had that hospital nurse deceived him?

The old lady before him seemed to have the sad story of Jane Ingoldsby at her fingers' ends. Probably she could tell Philip much more than he knew himself of his birth and his parentage; he resolved to wring the secret either from her fears or from her compassion.

Taking her hand suddenly, and yielding to the headlong impetuosity which was one of his characteristics, he poured forth the story of his crushed childhood and secluded youth, of his rencontre with the hospital nurse, and of her mention of the Duke of Renfrew, and her connection of his name with that of Jane Ingoldsby.

He did not mention Prince Charles Stuart's room, nor the red and white hearthstone; he spoke not concerning the marriage certificate, but he watched the face of the old lady, and wondered how much or little she knew of the secrets of her noble foster-brother. He read upon that face the firmest resolve, he saw how completely she was prepared to sacrifice him and everybody else to the interests of the duke and his connections, the Stantons.

"The history of Jane Ingoldsby, young gentleman, is a very sad one, and one that should be a warning to unwary youth. She was the daughter of a surgeon in Edinburgh, and my foster-brother, then Marquis of Aberlady, fell in love with her in the streets. They met several times, and then she consented to flee with him; they went to the Continent and lived there for a year or two. On their return they took up their abode in this very house, and a child was born here, after which the love of the marquis cooled.

"I know not what arrangements were entered into between them, but they seemed to have separated by mutual consent. The child I know was placed out

to nurse. I suppose Miss Jane Ingoldsbay was glad to be rid of the living fruit of her shame. The marquise came into his dukedom, and married another lady."

Old Mrs. Macneil shut her thin lips tightly when she had finished this recital, as though the truth were set at rest for regarding the Duke of Renfrew and Jane Ingoldsbay.

Ruthven again hid his face in his hands and thought deeply. At last he said:

"Would you permit me to remain for a few days in this house. There can be no doubt from all you have told me that I am really the son of this Duke of Renfrew, and this most weak and heartless woman called Jane Ingoldsbay. I should like to sleep in the house where I was born. I should like to walk about the rooms where my father and mother sat and talked in the days of their youth. It may be a romantic notion, but it is one even which the august duke himself might not scorn. Through his bounty I have been educated, and from him I still receive a small income. He has paid also, and is still willing to do so, for the expenses of my medical studies. Therefore you will perceive that he has some care for me now. Besides it is not his house; it is rather Mr. Stanton's leave you should ask. You cannot think I am a housebreaker or a burglar."

The old lady scanned him from head to foot, though not unkindly.

"There is not very much in this house," she said, "to tempt you, if even you were a person of that description, since all the plate and jewels are sent to the bank, and we keep very little money in the house; but I have no distrust of you. You are the son of my foster-brother, and if you like to send to the inn for your things, you may take up your abode here for a week, if you can make yourself comfortable with an old woman."

Things had turned out far better than Ruthven had dared to hope.

The old lady was very solitary, and the arrival of a young man who, although illegitimate, was still the son of her foster-brother—a young man, besides, of education and refinement, and who had seen something of the world, was an agreeable event.

Philip sent for his luggage from the inn, and took up his abode at Wyldersstone House.

It was very difficult for one of his impulsive nature to conceal the raging anxiety which he felt, and the burning indignation which surged up in his heart against his unnatural parents, and yet he managed to chat and dine with Mrs. Macneil, to take a drive with her in the cold air in an open phaeton, and to sit and read the *Times* aloud to her, while she was occupied in knitting.

There was only a man-servant and a woman-servant in the house, but a comfortable bed was prepared for Philip, not, however, in the chamber known as Prince Charles Stuart's.

The next morning Ruthven arose, dressed himself, and began to make a tour of the old mansion before Mrs. Macneil went down to make breakfast.

It was a strange old place, full of nooks and corners, and rooms in unexpected places, all furnished in rich, though old-fashioned taste. He had no means of finding out Prince Charles Stuart's room. But turning suddenly into a small round-shaped chamber, furnished in green, through the bay window of which the morning sun was shining brightly, a sort of instinct whispered to him that he stood in the room with the red and white hearthstone, beneath which the secret of his birth had slumbered for twenty years. There was a rich rug placed before the grate. Ruthven lifted it up; there was the hearthstone, a sort of mosaic, in fact, of red and white stones arranged in a fanciful way to represent the letter R, standing for the initial letter of the title of Renfrew. But would it be necessary to take up each of those stones? It would be a long and weary task, and he might be surprised long before he had accomplished it.

Philip felt it would be impracticable and unwise to take Mrs. Macneil into his confidence, since if he even found the certificates it might be surmised that he had placed them there himself. He stooped down and curiously examined the red and white stones; the morning sun shone dazzling upon a white stone which formed the centre-piece of the R. It was a stone about a foot in diameter—his heart beat fast as he discovered—cut, or scratched, in one corner, the date 1847. It was the date of his birth. That was the stone, then, which he would remove the first. He had taken the precaution to bring tools with him in his portmanteau.

But just at this juncture he heard the voice of Mrs. Macneil speaking loudly on the stairs, desiring the new servant to call Mr. Ruthven. How that day passed he could never remember, it was such a wretched day of fierce inward impatience and outward calmness. However, Philip managed to play his part to perfection.

In the dead of the night, when old Mrs. Macneil and the two servants were buried in slumber, he found his way noiselessly to the room of the red hearthstone. He locked the door, placed his lamp on the ground, and began forthwith to work away eagerly with his tools to remove the white stone which bore the date. Slowly it came up, as though unwilling to divulge the secret which it had so long hidden. While Philip was thus occupied, he heard a door bang loudly in another portion of the house. He paused and listened; then, since all was silent, he went on again. At last the stone was wrenched up, and between two rafters lay something coiled up, which looked like parchment. With fierce, impatient clutch he dragged it out, and rushed towards the light, and in his headlong speed he overturned the lamp with his foot. It was shivered to pieces and he was left in total darkness. His first impulse was to secure the parchment about his person.

The next moment the door of the room was forced violently open, a savage clutch was laid on his shoulder, and he found himself desperately struggling with a strong man.

CHAPTER XL.

Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear. Scott.

RUTHVEN was possessed of a muscular and vigorous strength. He struggled violently, desperately, with his unknown assailant. In a few moments he had him at his mercy, kneeling with all his weight upon the man's broad chest, and grasping his throat with his hands.

"Now, who are you, and what do you seek?" demanded Ruthven, hotly.

The man gasped out in accents of terror:
"Let me free, let me free; it is as I dreamed, I should be taken in the night and in the dark, I—"

And here he paused, as though he wished to recall his words.

"This is possibly an escaped lunatic," mused Philip. As he thought thus his hands relaxed their angry tension on the other's throat, and pity usurped the place of passion.

"Tell me what you seek," demanded Ruthven, in a gentler tone.

"Escape," answered the man, "from myself and the memory of what I have done."

"He is decidedly an escaped madman," said Philip, to himself; "and I must do the best I can either to secure him, if he is dangerous, or to aid him in escaping, if he has been unjustly incarcerated."

Then Philip spoke again to the man.

"Where have you escaped from?" he inquired.

The man answered only by frantic struggles to free himself from Ruthven's grasp. But Philip, young, slight, and active, had the best chance with him. He held him down with a determined force.

"Now," said he, "I shall call the household if you do not tell me what you seek."

"There is a treasure buried in this chamber," said the man. "A letter which fell from the pocket of a woman in the street in Edinburgh, was picked up by me, yesterday. I read its contents. A great secret lies hidden in this chamber—a secret which I desire to find and to sell. It is a secret worth a dukedom, and a certain Scotch duke would give some thousands to anybody to burn the proof of this secret. I entered here by a door in the wine-cellar, which communicates with the yard. I am quick at dodges of this sort. Whoever you are; if you seek to trade upon what I have told you, unless you go shares, I will publish the secret to the world, and you will lose what the Scotch duke would have given to buy your silence. Let me go free; let us seek for the papers and parchments, and you shall share this secret and the profits; only don't alarm the house; only don't give me into custody. Indeed, I can make your fortune, if you will trust me."

There was no tone in the man's voice which Ruthven recognised; the two had never met before, and yet a chill ran through Philip while he listened to the creature's words. There was a horrible croaking sound in the tone; there was nervous fear, brutal ferocity, guilt in the voice.

"Share your secret with you!" burst forth Ruthven, in contempt; "share your profits! No! you are a robber, who has entered this house that you may steal the birthright of an innocent man. I shall secure you. I shall call the house."

And here Ruthven grasped the long bell-rope which he knew was within his reach, and a pealing sound went through the house.

Then the prostrate man renewed his struggles, strove to take Ruthven unawares, to hit his face, in vain. The old man-servant, a gardener's boy who slept in the house, the cook, and, lastly, Mrs. Macneil herself heard the noise of the bell, and in a few minutes' time the room with the red hearthstone was

filled by the servants and the old lady housekeeper. The latter was wrapped in a large blue flannel dressing-gown, and wore an enormous night-cap. She carried besides a lighted lamp.

A scream of consternation burst from her lips when she perceived the stones torn up, the rug kicked into the corner, the lamp extinguished on the ground, and the two men engaged in what appeared like a very deadly struggle.

"Secure him! help me to bind him hand and foot," cried Ruthven.

This was not long in being effected. The man knew not how complete a stranger Ruthven was in that house, or he might have turned the tables by tolling some tales against him.

In a few seconds the ruffian lay bound hand and foot at the mercy of an alarmed household. The prisoner was a pale, stout man of forty, with a bald forehead, scanty red hair, a gleam of mingled ferocity and fear in his gray eyes. He pointed to the defaced hearthstone.

"See there!" he cried out, in an excited tone, "he has been beforehand with me. He has found the parchments."

"What parchments?" demanded old Mrs. Macneil, in a tone of anger. "Is that the reason, then, Mr. Ruthven, that you have entered this house, that you might seek for hidden documents touching the honour of a great family?"

Ruthven grew white as death with nervous fear. The parchments—the precious parchments—his by every right, human or divine, since they established the fact of his legitimacy, and cleared the name of his mother—was he to be forced to yield them up to these dependents of the proud house of Renfrew, in order that its mighty pride might meet with no rebuke? Nay, nay, his life first before those parchments. They were secured in the breast pocket of his coat. His eyes flashed as he turned them upon Mrs. Macneil.

"I confess, madam, that I came here to search for parchments, not in order that I might sell a secret to a great duke, but that I might discover if or no that great duke had committed an act of crying injustice, and if so, I might bring him to book."

All the clannish devotion to the great family of which she was a humble offshoot shone up in the eyes of the old Scotchwoman.

"Sir, sir," she said; "twenty boys like you, twenty lives as worthless, twenty faces as beardless, are nothing weighed against the honour, the stately repose, of the family of Renfrew. Give me up those parchments, or I will have them by force."

Philip folded his arms across his chest. "Only with my life do I yield up those parchments," he said. "Your old floors of Wyldersstone—and he spurned the oaken boards contemptuously with his heel as he spoke—"must be reddened with my blood before I will yield up these proofs of my birth, my honour, my title."

She stood back aghast.

"You speak wildly, young man."

Ruthven laughed a contemptuous laugh.

"Doubtless I speak very wildly," he replied, "for I am perhaps somewhat excited at the prospect of the great prize which has just come within my grasp. You shall only wrench it from me, madam, with my life."

"His grace must be apprised of this annoyance; his grace must be prepared; and that wretched man, your victim, or your accomplice, he shall be sent to prison for burglary—you for entering the house under false pretences."

Ruthven felt that the remorseless old Scotch lady, in her blind devotion to the great Highland family, would not scruple to destroy the precious parchments should they establish the fact of a *mesalliance* in the duke's time of youth.

He looked about him an instant, then suddenly dashing out of the open door, and down the stairs, he made for a certain back staircase, which he had taken note of during the time he had been secretly perambulating the house. On that staircase was a low, large lattice window, which opened on the flat leads of an outhouse. To dash upon the flats and thence, from a considerable height, to the lawn beneath, was only the work of a few moments with Ruthven. Afterwards he crossed the garden, climbed the wall with the skill and agility of a cat, leaped down into the road below, and finally found himself pacing along the high road towards Edinburgh, under a frosty moon, with the parchments safely buttoned in the breast pocket of his waistcoat.

His heart beat high with a strange and sudden hope. Never in all the years that were gone had such a singular feeling of elation—such a comforting, strong conviction of assured success—taken possession of his mind and soul.

He walked on confidently. He did not even hasten his steps in the fear of pursuit. He went on through

the cold of the wintry night, hatless, without an overcoat, but with no fear—no consciousness of weather or temperature. On, on he paced, ten miles, ten weary miles, to Edinburgh town; but they were not weary miles to the entranced, excited student of medicine.

At last he entered the picturesque streets, just as the winter dawn was breaking, and the sun was getting up blood-red in the east. He came on, and entered a coffee-house which was just open, called for fire, breakfast, and a private room. There, with his feet in the fender, and his plentiful breakfast spread out at his side, he opened his parchments, and read words which astonished him.

John, Duke of Renfrew, was a minor when he married the daughter of Mark Ingoldsby, surgeon, in the little kirk of Wylderstone village. From thence he had proceeded abroad with his wife. Eighteen months after his marriage he had taken up his abode for a short while in Wylderstone House, the property of his cousin, James Stanton. In that house had been born a son, called John, Marquis of Aberdail.

How it was that the certificates of marriage, birth, and baptism had been hidden under the red hearthstone, in lieu of being kept in the church, Rathven was at a great loss to understand, but he resolved to lose no time in presenting the documents to the highest firm of lawyers in Edinburgh, and urging upon them the necessity of enforcing his claim to the duke's notice. The hospital nurse also—the mysterious—excited, yet wonderfully self-possessed woman whom he believed to be his mother—she must be sought out, and explanations demanded.

It only struck him after reading the marriage between John Buchanan, Duke of Renfrew, and Jane, only daughter of Mark Ingoldsby, that there would be a difficulty, not so much in establishing the fact that a marriage had taken place, as in proving his own identity with the child born at Wylderstone House.

(To be continued.)

LATE DISCOVERIES AT SINAI.

THE Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University has published to the Senate a very interesting report from Mr. Q. H. Palmer, fellow of St. John's College, a distinguished Oriental scholar, who was sent by the University to accompany the Ordnance Survey in the Peninsula of Sinai. The funds were supplied from the foundation of Mr. Worts, formerly devoted to travelling bachelors.

Mr. Palmer has collected a great body of information on the nomenclature, the traditions, and the inscriptions of the country.

The following extracts contain an abstract for the general public:—

"Another, and still more interesting discovery, was a legend attaching to a spot called Erweia el Ebeirig, a day's journey from 'Ain Hudhrah, the ancient Hazeroth. Here the watershed of a broad valley is covered with small enclosures of stones, evidently the remains of a large encampment, though utterly unlike the other traces of Arab camps in the peninsula. On the summit of a neighbouring hill is an erection of unburnt stones, surmounted by a conspicuous white block of a pyramidal shape. These, the Arabs say, are the remains of the encampment of a large pilgrim caravan, who in remote ages pitched their tents on this spot when on their way to Hazeroth, and who were lost immediately afterwards on the Tib, or 'Wilderness of the Wanderings,' and never afterwards heard of. Judging from the terms in which the Arabic legend is expressed, the words used, and the form and character of the remains themselves, I have no doubt that they are, indeed, relics of the Israelites. The length of time that has elapsed since the event of the Exodus furnishes no argument against the probability of this supposition, as there are many monuments in the country in even better preservation, of a date indisputably far anterior.

"With regard to the so-called Sinaitic inscriptions I wish to make my own position clearly understood. In a matter which had occasioned so much controversy, I wished to form an opinion for myself before criticising the theories of others. . . . With this view I proceeded carefully to copy and examine them, and although I could not help remarking that they were undoubtedly nothing more than a phase of the ordinary Aramaic character, and as such, should present no difficulty to the Semitic scholar, I adhered to my resolution of accepting nothing on mere conjecture or analogy, and after some time succeeded in deciphering them by a perfectly independent and self-interpreting process. . . . At the same time, my collateral investigations compelled me to take a somewhat different view of the authorship of the inscriptions from that advanced by the persons to whom I have referred. I have

brought back a collection of nearly 3,000 of these inscriptions; in fact, a copy of every legible one extant in the Peninsula of Sinai, and I venture to say that when I have published them with their translations, the question of the Sinaitic inscriptions will have been definitely settled. . . . In the course of our explorations we found many interesting remains, almost identical with the primeval dwellings and tombs found in various parts of the United Kingdom. These discoveries drew my attention to another fact, which I think may prove important to British antiquaries, as suggesting an analogous explanation of the curiously marked stones of Scotland. It appears to have been a custom, from time immemorial, for the rude inhabitants of the desert to mark out their borders with large stones, on which each tribe cut or scratched its own particular symbol. This custom prevails to the present day, and it is a noteworthy circumstance that the marks now in use amongst some of the Arab tribes closely correspond in pattern and appearance with the stone markings of North Britain. I have brought back a collection of these marks and symbols."

Mr. Palmer announced the publication both of a scientific and of a popular account of his researches. G. H.

FEAR IN WOMEN.

THE mind, like the body, contracts tricks and habits which in time become automatic and involuntary—habits of association, tricks of repetition, of which the excess is monomania, but which, without attaining to quite that extreme, become more or less masters of the brain and directors of the thoughts. And, of all these tricks of the mind, the habit of fear is the most insidious and persistent. It is seldom that any one who has once given in to it is able to clear himself of it again. However unreasonable it may be, the trick clings, and it would take an exceptionally strong intellect to be convinced of its folly, and learn the courage of common sense.

But this is just the intellect which does not allow itself to contract the habit in the beginning; a coward being for the most part a washy, weak kind of being, with very little backbone anyhow. We do not mean by "fear" that which is physical and personal only, though this is generally the sole idea which people have of the word; but moral and mental cowardice as well. Personal fear, indeed, is common enough, and as pitiable as it is common; and we are ashamed to say that it is not confined to women, though naturally more pre-eminent with them than with men.

As for women, the tyranny of fear lies very heavy on them, taking the flavour out of many a life which else would be perfectly happy; being often the only bitter drop in a cup full of sweetness. But how bitter that drop is! bitter enough to destroy all the sweetness of the rest. Some women live in the perpetual presence of dread, both mental and personal. It surrounds them like an atmosphere; it clothes them like a garment; day by day, and from night to morning, it dogs their steps and sits like a nightmare on their hearts; it is their very rootwork of sensation, and they could as soon live without food as live without fear. Ludicrous as many of their terrors are, we still cannot help pitying the poor self-made martyrs of imaginary danger.

Take that most familiar of all forms of fear among women, the fear of burglars, and let us imagine for a moment the horror of the life which is haunted by a nightly dread—by a terror that comes with an unflinching regularity as the darkness—and measure, if we can, the amount of anguish that must be endured before death comes to take off the torture. There are many women to whom night is simply this time of torture, never varying, never relieved. They dare not lock their doors, because then they would be at the mercy of the man who, sooner or later, is to come in at the window; and if they hear the boards creak, or the furniture crack, they are in agonies because of the man who they are sure is in the house, and who will come in at the door. They cannot sleep if they have not looked all about the room—under the bed, behind the curtains, into the closet, where, perhaps, a dress hanging a little fantastically, gives them a nervous start that lasts for the night. But though they search so diligently, they would probably faint on the spot if they so much as saw the heels of the housebreaker they are looking for. Yet you cannot reason with these poor creatures. You cannot deny the fact that burglars have been found before now secreted in bedrooms, and you cannot pooh-pooh the murders and housebreakings that are reported in the newspapers; so you have nothing to say to their argument that things which have

happened once may happen again, and that there is no reason why they specially should be exempt from a misfortune to which others like them have been subjected. P. M.

FACETIE.

WHAT is generally the favourite note of a public singer?—A tenor (tenor).

A YOUNG LADY'S SENTIMENT.—If it was not good for Adam to live single when there was not a woman on earth, how criminally guilty are the old bachelors, with the world full of pretty girls!

DIFFERENCE OF OPINION.—"I wonder," said a Scotch maiden, "what my brother John sees in the lasses that he likes them as weel; for my part I wad nae gie the company o' one lad for twenty lasses."

A LADY advertises for sale one baboon, three tabby cats, and a parrot. She states that, being now married, she has no further use for them, for the reason that their amiable qualities are all combined in her husband.

COUNTRY PRODUCE.—Recent reports state that Bridgewater has produced a large crop of Bribeberry. The only objection to this fruit (of an inquiry) is that it stains the fingers very much.—Fun.

A KEEN PERCEPTION.—Seeing "Budding Knives" in the outlaid windows just now, we inquire—"will they have grown sufficiently by Christmas to slope into the sirloin of beef?"—Fun.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—A man complaining of being turned out of a concert-room, said that he was fired with indignation. "If you were fired," added a bystander, "perhaps that was the reason they put you out."

SWELL (anxious to explain that he is the West-end article): "Here, waitaw, I want to go to a place called Islington. Suppose, if I take cab, it'll be all right—I shan't be waylaid or wobbled on the road?"—Fun Almanack, 1870.

FAMILIAR ASTRONOMY.—Are we not growing rather too playful with the heavenly bodies? Here is a book advertised with the title *Half Hours with the Stars*, to be followed, we may certainly expect, by *Twenty Minutes with Comets*, *Spare Moments with the Aurora Borealis*, &c.—Punch.

WHAT is the difference between a concealed conjuror and an important bloodvessel in the neck?—One is a vain juggler, and the other is the jugular vein.—Will-o-the-Wisp.

A MIDDLE-AGED spinster, at a recent Woman's Rights Convention, said she did not care about female suffrage unless it carried with it the right to make proposals of marriage.

Two Quaker girls were ironing on the same table. One asked the other which side she would take, the right or left. She answered promptly: "It will be right for me to take the left, and then it will be left for thee to take the right."

"EVERYTHING has its use," said a philosophical professor to his class. "Of what use is a drunkard's fiery red nose?" asked one of his pupils. "It's a lighthouse," answered the professor, "to warn us of the little water that passes underneath it, and reminds us of the shoals of appetite on which we might otherwise be wrecked."

A GOOD NAME.

LODGER: "Somebody called in my absence!—Did he leave any name?"

MARY: "Oh, yes, sir, he said it was Immaterial!"—Fun Almanack, 1870.

SCENE—WAR OFFICE.

JONES, a clerk, discovered reading the *Times*; Brown, another clerk, reading the *Standard*; Robinson, a third clerk, reading an official document.

Robinson: Oh, I say, ye know, here's a fellow wants the use of a lot of spades for spade-drill.

Brown: Oh, bother! We shall have beggars always applying for spades for spade-drill, ye know.

Jones: Can't be done—of course!

Robinson sits down and writes:—"I am directed by the Secretary of State for War to acknowledge, etc., and to inform you that your application cannot be complied with. I have the honour to be."

Omnes: Oh, yes, of course! Couldn't he do so!—Fun.

SOVEREIGNS AT STAMBOUL.

THERE'S the Empress Eugénie just left Constantinople, and the Kaiser Francis-Joseph getting ready to go there; and there's the Hartha carvette, with the Crown Prince of Prussia, anchored in the Golden Horn, and the Dolphin gunboat landing the Prince Louis of Hesse at the Begler-bah Palace, and the

Duke d'Aosta on his way up the Dardanelles in his yacht the Vendetta! Thinking of the bewildered Stamboulians in this crush of crowns and half-crowns, one is tempted to improve on the old school-boy sequepdallians, and to sing or say:
*Conturbantur Constantinopolitani
 Innumeralibus crowned-et-headling-ibus.*—*Punch.*
 Has anybody got a photograph of the head of the table—it has been taken a great many times?—*Judy Almanack, 1870.*

ON DEPORTMENT.—Few people present a graceful appearance when riding a bicycle, none when diving—into their pockets. —*Judy Almanack, 1870.*

GNATTY IDEA.—If you see a swarm of gnats to-day, it is a sign that it will be as warm to-morrow. This is known to all students of *Gnat-ural History.* —*Judy Almanack, 1870.*

THAT'S THE QUESTION.—*Young lady, who will grow up presently, and know better:* Yes, I did take away the engine! There! And Aunt Julianna says the big men are all fond of dolls, so why shouldn't the little boys be? And we girls ought not to have such friv—friv—frivey—something playthings. —*Judy Almanack, 1870.*

REACTION.

Talented Authors: "Sensational? Oh dear, no! They are all plain 'goody goody' people, who call on each other, and talk the mildest scandal. The only incident of any kind is a wedding in the third volume."

Editor: "Ah, well, I'll look it over!" —*Punch.*
 "SALT IS GOOD."

SIR TITUS SALT is providing eleven acres of park for the people of Saltaire. This is literally being the Salt of the Earth. Honour to a Titus who really increases the Delight of Mankind. —*Punch.*

CONCURRENCE.

WHY is an oyster one of the greatest anomalies in nature?—Because it has a beard without a chin, and is taken out of bed to be "tucked in."

What is the difference between half a glass of water and a broken engagement?—One is not filled full, and the other is not fulfilled.

Why is the letter S like thunder?—Because it makes our cream sour cream.

What are the most profitable of all businesses?—The shoe, for every pair is soled before it is finished.

Why is an ear of wheat and an oak similar in origin?—Because they both spring from a corn.

Why is the ballad of Cock Robin's death like the letter C?—Because it makes a clerk of the lark.

Why are A, E, and U the handsomest of the vowels?—Because you cannot have beauty without them.

Why is the letter O like a generous fairy?—Because it turns ash into cash.

Why is a worn-out shoe like ancient Greece?—Because it once had a Solon (sole on).

Why is a man lifting a side of bacon off a hook to be pitied?—Because he's a poor creature (pork reacher).

Why is a prima donna in love with music like that which policemen most frequent?—Because both are dependent on an area (aria).

AN IRISH INNKERPER.

English Gentleman: "Hollo—house!"
 Landlord: "I don't know anyone of that name, hereabouts."

Gent.: "Are you the master of this inn?"
 Land.: "Yes, sir, please your honour—when my wife's from home."

Gent.: "Have you a bill of fare?"
 Land.: "Yes, sir, surely—the fair of Kildorery is next week, and Ballyspugmalone the week after."

Gent.: "Tut! how are your beds?"
 Land.: "Very well, I thank you, sir."

Gent.: "Is your cellar good?"
 Land.: "Oh, never fear that, sir—I only want the buyers to make me a seller."

Gent.: "Is your port fine?"
 Land.: "Never a finer port in the three kingdoms, sir, than Cork harbour—and sure I'm quite convenient to it."

Gent.: "Have you any porter?"
 Land.: "Have I, is it? I'll engage he is an excellent porter; he'll make out any place at all."

Gent.: "But I mean porter to drink."
 Land.: "Oh, sir, he'll drink the ocean—not a doubt of it."

Gent.: "Have you any fish?"
 Land.: "They call myself an odd fish."

Gent.: "I think so. I hope you're no shark."
 Land.: "No, sir, indeed—I'm no lawyer."

Gent.: "Have you any sole?"
 Land.: "For your boots and shoes, sir?"

Gent.: "Pshaw! have you any plaice?"

Land.: "I have not, sir; but I was promised one if I'd only vote the way I did not at the last election."

Gent.: "Have you any wild fowl?"
 Land.: "They're tame enough now, for that matter—for they have killed these ten days."

Gent.: "I must see myself."
 Land.: "And welcome, sir. I'll fetch you a looking glass in a minute."

A LONE NIGGER.—During the war a "contraband" came into the Federal lines in North Carolina, and was marched up to the officer of the day to give an account of himself, whereupon the following colloquy ensued: "What's your name?" "My name is Sam."

"Sam what?" "No, sah; not Sam Watt, I'se jist Sam."

"What's your other name?" "I hasn't got no other name, sah. I'se Sam, dat's all."

"What's your master's name?" "I'se got no massa. Massa runned away. Yah! yah! I'se free nigger now."

"Now, what's your father's and mother's name?" "I'se got none, sah; never had none. I'se jist Sam—sah! nobody else."

"Haven't you any brothers and sisters?" "No, sah! neber had none. No brudder, no sister, no foddor, no mudder, no massa—nothin' but Sam. When you see Sam, you see all dere is of us."

SIX O'CLOCK P.M.

THE workshops open wide their doors
 At six o'clock P.M.,
 And workmen issue forth by scores
 At six o'clock P.M.;

Of all the minutes in array,
 Or hours that go to make the day,
 There's none so welcome, so they say,
 As six o'clock P.M.

How many children show delight
 At six o'clock P.M.!

How many homes are rendered bright
 At six o'clock P.M.!

How many little happy feet
 Go out into the busy street,
 With joyous bounds papa to meet,
 At six o'clock P.M.!

Thousands of tables draped in white
 At six o'clock P.M.,
 The gathered families invite
 At six o'clock P.M.;

And as they eat the frugal fare
 They quite forget their toil and care,
 And drop their heavy burdens there,
 At six o'clock P.M.

Then blow, ye shrieking whistles, blow!
 At six o'clock P.M.,
 And let the weary toilers go
 At six o'clock P.M.;

Ring out, releasing bells, ring out!
 And bid the welkin take the shout,
 And echo it all round about,
 "Tis six o'clock P.M.!"

A. K.

STATISTICS.

WRECKS.—The following short statement shows the annual average of wrecks reported since 1850, divided into three periods of five and one of four years:—1850, 460; 1851, 1,269; 1852, 1,115; 1853, 892—making a total in those four years of 3,876 wrecks and casualties, and giving an average each year of 969. In 1854, 987; 1855, 1,141; 1856, 1,153; 1857, 1,143; and 1858, 1,170—total in five years, 5,594, an average annually of 1,118. In 1859, 1,419; 1860, 1,379; 1861, 1,494; 1862, 1,488; and 1863, 1,664; giving a total in the five years ending 1863 of 7,441, and an average in every year of 1,488. In 1864, 1,390; 1865, 1,656; 1866, 1,800; 1867, 2,090; and 1868, 1,747. Total for the five years to the end of 1868, 8,743; the average number of wrecks annually in the same period being consequently 1,748. It will thus be seen that the number of wrecks reported during 1868 is just below the average for the last five years, but is in excess of the average of all the years previous to that period. With the exception of the numbers reported in 1867 and 1866, the largest number of wrecks ever reported in one year is, unhappily, given to the past year.

POOR-LAW EXPENDITURE.—The twenty-first annual report of the Poor-law Board for the year 1868-69 has been issued. From this it appears that the sum of 7,498,061*l.* was expended for the relief of the poor during the parochial year 1867-68. Owing to the returns as to expenditure being always in arrear, in consequence of being kept open until the accounts of the parochial year ending on Lady-day are closed and audited, the statistics as to the total expenditure for the parochial year could not be included. The amount expended for relief in 1866-67

was 6,959,841*l.*, or at the rate of 6*s.* 6*d.* per head in population, while for the year 1867-68 its rate was 6*s.* 11*d.* per head. The amount paid for maintenance for the six months ending Michaelmas, 1868, was 726,043*l.*, and for out-door relief 1,837,980*l.*, being an increase on the corresponding period of 1867 of 107,417*l.* The number of paupers of all classes in receipt of relief on the 1st January, 1869—indoor, 168,417; outdoor, 878,152; total 1,046,569; being an increase over the corresponding date of 1867 of 6,466. The number of adult able-bodied paupers was—indoor, 29,826; outdoor, 158,386; total, 188,162.

GEMS.

YOUNG man, know that downright decision on things, which only experience can teach, is the credential of vain impertinence.

NOR he that forces himself on opportunity, but he who watches its approach, and welcomes its arrival by immediate use, is wise.

IF the principles of contentment are not within us, the height of station and worldly grandeur will as soon add a cubit to a man's stature as to his happiness.

NO knowledge which terminates in curiosity and speculation is comparable to that which is of use; and of all useful knowledge that is most so, which consists in a due care and just notion of ourselves.

A MAN cannot possess anything that is better than a good woman, nor anything that is worse than a bad one.

MISCELLANEOUS.

TO FACILITATE CALCULATION.—Any number of figures you wish to multiply by 5 will give the same result if divided by 2—a much quicker operation; but you must remember to annex a cipher to the answer when there is no remainder, and when there is a remainder, whatever it may be, annex a 5 to the answer. Multiply 464 by 5, and the answer will be 2,320; divide the same number by 2 and you have 282, and as there is no remainder, you add a cipher. Now take 367, and multiply by 5; the answer is 1,785. On dividing this by 2, there is 178, and a remainder, you therefore place a 5 at the end of the result, which is again 1,785.

A BREACH OF PROMISE CASE.—The loves of a Liverpool merchant and a middle-aged widow occupied the attention of the assessor in the Court of Passage on Tuesday, in the form of a claim for 500*l.* damages for an alleged breach of promise to marry. The plaintiff was Mrs. Ann Pritchard, and the defendant was Mr. John Rowlinson, an indigo and general merchant. They made each other's acquaintance in an auction room during the lifetime of the lady's husband, and before the latter's death the enamoured merchant promised to marry Mrs. Pritchard as soon as she was a widow. When death had released Mrs. Pritchard from her matrimonial ties, the indigo dealer renewed his promise, and on the faith of this the widow consented to live with him. Subsequently, however, he secured her assent to a deed of release, under which Mrs. Pritchard was to be paid sums in satisfaction of all claims. The widow does not appear to have looked upon this as a renunciation of her right to be the wife of Mr. Rowlinson, for, finding him slow to fulfil his promise, she sought the aid of Mr. Attorney-General Pickering, Q.C., who, however, decided that the deed was fatal to the claim.

HUNT FOR A MAN-EATING TIGRESS.—A letter from Major Davies, dated Hassamur, August 22, gives the following particulars:—"Webster, Norie, Irvine, and I started in search of her on the 13th. We pitched at Ranyrapallim on the 15th, and on the following morning we came on the pugs of the tigress, and the ground fortunately being moist, we tracked her to a place in which she had been lying, all ready for a man. She had sneaked off up a nullah just before we came up, and we lost her for a time. About twelve o'clock we heard that she had been seen by some of the hunters. I went back with Irvine, and taking up her track again we tracked her steadily up till, by great blessing, I saw her standing broadside on, about twenty or thirty yards off, and shot her by a fluke through the heart. Webster and Norie had the heart taken out, and found the bullet had cut it in half. Luckily no one saw her till I put up the rifle, so there was no stampede. She was an old lankey tigress, with worn-down teeth, standing high, but otherwise small. Whilst we were tracking her up she had not condescended to move more than a few yards at a time ahead of us without lying down. She was carried round the village in state on a car with great rejoicings in the evening, and a nautch was given in our honour which we would gladly have avoided."

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CAMBRIAN (Belfast).—Received with thanks.
J. M. C. was replied to in No. 340 of the LONDON READER.

R. LOWTHER.—The handwriting is exceedingly good; good enough for any occupation.

J. L. D.—We can form no opinion of your ability. Your handwriting would do very well.

MAYNARD REDFERN.—Your handwriting is sufficiently good for the occupations you name.

LUCE L.—Have you not made some mistake? We have at present no correspondent who signs "J. T. H."

S. A.—"Mitchell's Maritime Register," published weekly at 54, Gracechurch Street, E.C., contains all the shipping news.

J. T. (Southport).—Your application is deficient in particulars to enable our readers to judge of the suitability of the applicant.

P. F. HOME.—Handwriting good, but accompanied with too many flourishes. Don't wear spectacles, except upon the advice of a competent oculist.

G. W. TOWER.—The best legal means of recovering so small an amount is by summons in the County Court. Apply to the Court for that district in which the debt was contracted.

MARGARET M.—Bathe the hands frequently in lemon juice. If we knew a lady of the height you mention, we should prefer that her gloves did not exceed the size known as six-three-quarters.

A. B. C.—You are evidently wanting that robust health which is so essential to preserve the tone of the voice. Your duty, therefore, is simply to avail yourself of every opportunity to increase the vigour of your physical system.

RETRIEVER.—You are liable to be taxed for a dog directly it comes into your possession. You should, therefore, apply at once to a post-office, where dog licenses can now be procured. The food must be left to your discretion, which will be guided by the "nature of the beast."

H. J. W.—The ground part of the globes of lamps is done at the glass works in the course of the manufacture of the article. That dull appearance is produced by rubbing one piece of glass over another, emery powder being placed between.

M. BOWER.—We fear there is little chance of hearing tidings of your son, unless he voluntarily communicates with you. It is, however, as yet early days. He would hardly be able to get employment and settle in ten weeks, which includes the time he was on his voyage.

WILD TRAIL.—Apply to the musical director, or to the chorus master. Your voice would be tried, and you would be questioned as to your knowledge of music. The commonest salary of an approved person is about a guinea per week. You write a good ordinary hand.

W. WARY.—Your communication has been received, and will be considered. Have you not noticed our regulation always printed at the bottom of this page? En passant, we may observe that your title, at least, is deficient in originality.

G. THOMAS.—It will be injurious for you to practise with too heavy weights. Use your judgment upon the matter. We cannot speak more definitely, because your age is not an index to your constitution. Your letter is fairly written; there is one mistake in the spelling.

DELIA.—You can try the effects of what is called marrow pomatum, that is, a pomatum composed of the marrow from beef or mutton bones, scented with otto of cloves or some similar perfume. As you have youth on your side, it may be desirable to have your head shaved.

NEVILL.—A correspondent (S. W.) is kind enough to send us the result of his experience in the treatment of this complaint. He says that he experienced great relief from taking the homoeopathic preparation known as "Ignatia Amara"—dose, one pill twice a day.

ANXIOUS FRIEND.—An unpaid letter would stand small chance of being returned from New York, unless it was sent by a tolerably known individual on this side. If, however, the postage was paid and the writer's address legibly given, it might, if uncalled for, find its way back to the sender in about three months.

A. SUFFERER.—It is not very likely that you will get the better of your malady as long as you allow it to influence your thoughts so much as to write about it. We have no sympathy with you. You can help yourself, but will not; that is your case. Meanwhile you are drifting down into a most unenviable position, a position of certain degradation in every respect.

ISADORE.—Leave off those expensive preparations to which you allude, and use a simple pomatum merely for the sake of dressing the hair. Probably the thinness is occasioned by some constitutional derangement, or by anxiety. The best thing is to take care of your general health. The writing is deficient in neatness, occasioned partly by those long crosses to some of the t's; but yet it is a good hand.

D. R.—You have made a bargain, and must abide by it. That is the impression upon our mind after reading your lengthy epistle, a great deal of which is quite irrelevant to the matter at issue. If you make default in payment, you will probably be sued in the County Court, when, to do your case any good, it must be shown, not simply that the article is dear, but that it is not what it was represented to be.

G. O. (Stirling).—You have correctly stated the form in which the I. O. U. should be written. Its legal effect is that it is evidence of the debt, and can be used as such upon an action brought in the superior or County Courts. An I. O. U. does not carry interest, nor is it transferable like a bill of exchange; it is also liable to come within the Statute of Limitations, that is, if the holder should not in any way demand payment for six years after the date, the claim thereon could be barred by the statute. Your handwriting is distinct.

ADOLPH.—The duties of stewards' men and boys on board ship are something similar to those of waiters on land. These situations are obtained through private recommendation; the steward usually provides himself with his own subordinates. All you can do is to personally make your wants known to persons connected with the shipping interest, such as captains, shipbrokers, and so forth. Give up the idea of earning; nothing is easy that is worth having. You must find your own outfit. The writing is good.

J. A. BOKKWOOD.—The bond is evidence of the contract of debt, and therefore, in default of payment and after action brought, the persons who signed the bond can be sent to prison. The act which comes into operation on the 1st January next declares that "any court may commit for a term not exceeding six weeks, or until payment, any person who makes default in payment of any debt due from him in pursuance of any order or judgment of the court." Notwithstanding the hiring of the house by another, the goods would be taken if they were proved to be really the property of him who signed the bond.

STANLEY.
Whilst round us blessing sun-rays stream,
And heaven in blue expands;
Night and the pale moon's colder beam
Look down on other lands.

And thus whilst joy within our breast,
Prompts the glad thought or smile;
Others in sorrow and unrest
Are shedding tears the while.

Blest heaven! whilst this brief course we run,
Thy loving aid impart;
May we ne'er damp the happy one,
Nor wound the aching heart! W. H.

VALENTINE FOX AND A. SUFFERER.—Both these letters appear to come from the same correspondent. We, therefore, answer them together. The handwriting, though peculiar, is distinct. Whatever metallic arrangement may be necessary for the nose should only be applied upon the advice of a surgeon, who would direct the surgical instrument making in that matter. The cost would amount to some five guineas at least. If disfigurement is the only inconvenience, you will probably find it best to let the affair alone. Flowers out of season can be procured nowhere. The post-office is the best method of transit for a valentine to America. We cannot find the name of the vessel in the list of wrecks.

P. H.—A lady with a lover cannot be too circumspect in the choice of confidants. Parents, and more especially a mother, are obviously the safest and most proper depositaries of those fond secrets that relate to the affections; and when a more unrestricted intercourse is desired, the selection cannot be too cautiously made. If the lady chosen be of a light and frivolous temperament, she will make a dangerous companion; for, being unable to impart sound advice, she will be desirous of amusing herself at the expense of her friend's affection, or, as she would most likely term it, infatuation, and thus sow the seeds of the most serious mischiefs. Did she possess no lover of her own she would most probably be inclined to flirt with her friend's, and thus create the germs of an ill feeling that might ripen into confirmed jealousy. Besides, it should be borne in mind that the reputation of the confidant is sure to be shared by the lady, and as it is notorious that many engagements have been brought to a close through these very friendships, as they are termed, that is an additional reason why young ladies should be exceedingly discreet in forming them.

ISADORA MILROY.—You have acted with great propriety and discretion, and all you have to do is to let well alone. Should the truant return you can require a full explanation, upon which it would be proper for you to take the advice of your friends. Doubtless the gentleman was smitten, and thought he meant all he said; but with the "best intentions," it appears that he was unable to give you any proof of his love; that is the test which it is alike the woman's duty and the man's to apply. When she gives her heart she gives all that she cares for, and she should endeavour to be sure that she at least gets a heart in return. Now, to sob and to talk of loving most fondly as well as to show such expressions of affection as make every feature speak with devoted earnestness may be consistent with a very large amount of passion, mixed with the slightest modicum of real love. True love is a nature too noble to win in order to throw aside. True love would never let its fondness be known if it were not in a position to give truth of its sincerity. True love works, fights, endures, and consumes the physical frame in death—but it never runs away.

BETA.—The Royal style, as settled on the 5th of November, 1800, in consequence of the Union with Ireland, which was to commence from the 1st of January, 1801, runs thus: "George the Third, by the Grace of God, of the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and of the United Church of England and Ireland the Supreme Head." In the Latin it is differently expressed: "Georgius Tertius, Dei gratia Britanniarum Rex," &c., the word "Britanniarum," first introduced upon that occasion, being regarded as expressive, under one term, of the incorporated kingdoms of England, Ireland, and Scotland. James the First, when he ascended the throne of England, revived the title, which had been laid aside by an edict of Edward, in the commencement of the ninth century, and styled himself, "King of Great Britain," comprehending, under that appellation, his dominion over England and Scotland. Before the "Union of the Crowns," Britain alone was used in the style of our Sovereigns, to signify England and Wales. Alfred, however, was called, "Governor of the Christians of Britain." Edgar, "Monarch of Britain." Henry the Second, "King of Britain," and, nearly synonymous with the latter, John was styled "Rex Britannie." The title of Queen Victoria is, "Her Most Excellent Majesty Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, Sovereign of the Orders of the Garter, Thistle, Bath, St. Patrick, St. Michael, and St. George."

R. R. R.—We reply to you, and others similarly affected, by giving some general advice on the subject. The use of green glasses, so common of late among those who have weak eyes, is a bad habit, wholly contrary to the nature of the organ, and to the true principles of treatment in such cases. Their very general adoption is probably founded on the fact that nature has spread this colour so profusely through her works, and the very natural inference that the colour provided by her, and so eminently beneficial to healthy eyes, must of necessity be useful to those which are weak. It has been proved, however, by the experience of thousands, that this opinion is incorrect. Instead of diminishing weakness, in a vast proportion of cases, they increase it. They throw a sombre, melancholy, and disagreeable hue upon all objects, wholly unlike nature's soft and pure colour. The eye is strained by them. When they have been worn for a long time, its sensibility becomes morbidly elevated, and it is unable to bear the light, which is its natural healthy stimulus, without uneasiness or pain. They are only useful when the individual is obliged to be exposed to a bright glare of light for any length of time, which cannot be moderated in any other way; as in travelling over snow when it is highly illuminated by the rays of the sun, or in sailing upon the water, where he is subject to the dazzling and dangerous reflection from its surface. The weak-sighted, therefore, should only have recourse to them on these and similar occasions, and beware of crippling the eyes by their continual employment.

RED ROSE, twenty-one, and good tempered. Respondent must be steady.

VIOLET, twenty-two, merry disposition, and good family connections. Respondent should be a tradesman.

GEORGIE, twenty-two, fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes. Respondent must have 200L. or 300L. per annum.

WHITE ROSE, twenty, lively, merry, and has a little money. Respondent should be a sailor.

CAMELIA ADELINA, nineteen, tall, fair, good looking, with a nice income. Would like to correspond with a tall, fair gentleman.

MAUD, tall, dark, very musical, and has an income of 300L. a-year. Respondent need only have a small income as money is no object, but he must be "sensible."

MYRTLE ADELIA, seventeen, medium height, fair complexion, and domesticated. Respondent must be rather tall, gentlemanly, in easy circumstances, and fond of music.

WOODLAND (a gentleman), twenty-four, tall, dark, handsome, with property valued at about 10,000L. a year. Respondent must be a good musician, good looking, and sweet tempered.

DAISY, fair complexion, dark hair, violet eyes, short in stature, sings well, dances well, fond of society, and enjoys an income of 400L. a-year. Respondent must be able to soothe her sorrows, share her joys.

MARGUERITE ELAINE, tall, fair complexion, hazel eyes, dark curling hair, ladylike, accomplished, and domestic. Respondent must be tall, dark, gentlemanly, fond of music, and have an income of not less than 300L. per annum.

AFFECTIONATE, by travel long kept from female society, but now domiciled as a licensed victualler, wishes for an agreeable partner, not exceeding thirty years of age; he has property unconnected with business, and should prefer the lady to possess a little; he is rather above medium height, and considered gentlemanly.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:
POLLY is responded to by—"D. W. H.," who wishes for carte de visite.

JANE by—"J. M. K.," who wishes for carte de visite.

LILIAN MARIA by—"C. S.," nineteen, 5ft. 8 in., dark, and handsome.

MABEL CATERLEY by—"P. B. T.," twenty-seven, gentlemanly, good looking, fair hair, long whiskers, and in receipt of 200L. a-year; would be glad to exchange cartes.

E. R. would be glad if "Young Hopeful" would communicate with her.

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